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ABSTRACT

This report on vocational education and training (VET) in Poland has nine chapters. Chapter 1 presents the socioeconomic situation; explains reasons for different rates of development in particular regions; and presents trends in job creation and rise and fall in unemployment. Chapter 2 deals with changes in the VET field in these areas: VET's organizational structure; overall level of education; and access to learning institutions in urban and rural areas resulting from reforms at national, regional, and local levels. It defines the relationship between VET and the labor market and identifies and describes elements, the presence or absence of which are indicative of the extent to which VET is adjusted to the labor market. Chapter 3 deals with matters related to development of labor resources against the background of opportunities that continuing education provides. Chapter 4 presents Polish research on the labor market and VET. Chapters 5 and 6 provide data on the government and non-governmental bodies, institutions, and organizations responsible for VET. Chapter 7 addresses financing VET in a market economy environment. Chapter 8 examines the role and importance of foreign assistance in reforming the VET. Chapter 9 deals with the need for and obstacles to reform in the Polish VET system. Appendixes include a list of abbreviations, 80-item bibliography, and diagrams of the current and new education and training system. (YLB)

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ED 445 232

Report on the vocational education and training system

NATIONAL OBSERVATORY COUNTRY REPORT

Poland
1999

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National Observatory Network
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European Training Foundation

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This project is supported by the European Union's Phare and Tacis Programmes

Report on the vocational education and training system in Poland

Poland
1999

Preface

This is the third edition of our report, which deals with vocational education and training in Poland against the background of the economic and social changes that have taken place since 1989. Year after year, this publication has widened its audience, both in Poland and abroad. One of the chief reasons for the growing popularity and, consequently, the usefulness of the report is the topicality of issues it presents, the objectiveness of the opinions presented by independent experts and the cohesiveness of their research on changes in the education system and, more specifically, in vocational education and training, in Poland. The report is sought after by many, including:

- decision makers at government level who are responsible for the functioning of the education institutions;
- labour market institutions;
- social partners (employers, employees) who participate in the work of institutions promoting social dialogue;
- teachers;
- others employed in the field of education;
- students; and
- social workers.

Among the many publications available in Poland on changes taking place in the field of education as a result of the transformation of the political system, our report is noted for its systematic analysis and the increasing emphasis it places on the interrelationship between education and the labour market, against the background of those changes.

One of the main characteristics of the Polish labour market after 1989 is massive, structural unemployment. For several years now, there have been repeated attempts to solve this problem. One of the reasons for the imbalance between labour supply and demand is that the training and qualifications of part of the labour force have not adjusted sufficiently to changes in the labour market. It is for this reason that Poland has to meet the challenge of rapidly reforming the system of vocational education and training and modernising school and training programmes. Such reforms should increase the chances of finding employment for young people leaving vocational schools.

The problems raised in the report must also be seen in the international context of Poland's application to join the European Union. Ensuring the value and quality of the Polish labour force is particularly important in view of the future free movement of labour on the European labour market. In the near future, vocational education and training will have to provide the basis for increasing the competitiveness of the Polish worker on the domestic and international labour markets.

Because of the domestic and international dimensions of the issues discussed in the report, a great deal of attention is given to an analysis of the different phases, stages and elements in both initial and continuing vocational education, the modernisation or development of which could contribute significantly to the process of reform. In addition to a diagnosis of the current situation in vocational

education and training, the report also includes conclusions and recommendations on the direction that further reform efforts by government and non-governmental institutions should take at national, regional and local levels.

The 1999 Report was prepared as part of the programme of the National Observatory on Vocational Education and Training, which was launched, in 1996, on the initiative of the European Training Foundation, Turin. The Polish Observatory forms part of the network of observatories active in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The European Training Foundation also initiates and finances expert opinions, reports and research projects on selected topics that are particularly important for the reform of the education system. The report has been prepared with the participation of teachers from various fields of study and of economists and sociologists dealing with the labour market. The opinions in it are presented independently of centres of decision making and political influence.

On behalf of the Polish Observatory, we wish to thank the experts and all the persons who have taken part in preparing this publication and the European Training Foundation for providing programme assistance and financial support.

Danuta Możdżeńska-Mrozek

Executive summary

The following report consists of nine chapters.

The first chapter presents the socio-economic situation in Poland, taking into consideration the privatisation process and the development of the small and medium-sized business sector. It also contains information on regional policy and outlines some of the reasons for the different rates of development in particular regions. Additional data on Polish society is provided in the sections on demography and the social security system. The last part of the first chapter deals with the labour market, employment policy and policies to deal with unemployment. It presents trends in job creation and in the rise and/or fall in unemployment.

Chapter 2 deals with the changes that are taking place in the field of vocational education and training. It stresses the changes in the organisational structure of vocational education and training. It also analyses changes in such areas as the overall level of education, access to learning institutions in urban and rural areas etc. that have come about as a result of reforms at national, regional and local levels. Of particular interest is the second part of the chapter, which attempts to define the relationship between vocational education and the labour market. A number of elements, the presence or absence of which is indicative of the extent to which vocational education is adjusted to the labour market, are identified and described. These include:

- the development of national regulations with regard to qualifications;
- the classification of job and career profiles;
- progress in the modernisation of education programmes; and
- the evaluation of qualifications in terms of their usefulness on the labour market.

Chapter 3 deals with matters related to the development of labour resources against the background of the opportunities that continuing education provides. An important factor in this regard is the various forms – curricular and extracurricular, residential and distance learning – which continuing education takes and which, in effect, determine the range of vocational education that is available to young people and adults.

Chapter 4 presents Polish research on the labour market and vocational education and training since 1989. The aim of this chapter is to identify the main research trends in the two areas.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide data on the government and non-governmental bodies, institutions and organisations responsible for vocational education, as well as their legal and formal situation at the current stage of the reforms.

Chapters 7 looks at the problem of financing vocational education for young people and adults in a market economy environment, while Chapter 8 examines the role and importance of foreign assistance in reforming the vocational education system.

Special attention should be given to chapter 9, which deals with the need for, and obstacles to, reform in the Polish vocational education and training system. The approach adopted is, in a sense, unique, first of all, in that it takes into account and integrates the perspectives of both teachers in the vocational education and training system and economists dealing with the labour market. Secondly, it also includes the opinions of independent experts.

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1. Political and socio-economic background information

1.1 Economic development

Poland was the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to start a process of radical economic transformation in 1989. It was also the first country to benefit from the reforms that were implemented as a result of that process.

1998 was the seventh year of uninterrupted economic growth. Gross domestic product grew by 4.7%, which indicates a slowdown in the growth rate by 2 percentage points compared to 1997. Even the current growth rate of nearly 5%, however, makes Poland one of the most dynamic economies in Europe, preceded only by Ireland (8.5%), Luxembourg (5.5%) and Hungary (5.1%)[1].

Table 1.1 Changes in gross domestic product, 1991-1998

	Preceding year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Gross domestic product	= 100%	93.0	102.6	103.8	105.0	107.0	106.0	106.8	104.8

Source: National Statistics Office – www.stat.gov.pl/stale/selected.htm

It should also be stressed that the economic recovery in Poland was much faster than in any other country in transition[2].

The average rate exchange used in the report for 1998 is: 1 Euro = PLN 3.9 and, for 1999: 1 Euro = PLN 4.1.

Table 1.2 Selected socio-economic indicators, 1990-1998

Indicator a - preceding year=100	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Population in thousands (end of the year)	38,183	38,309	38,418	38,505	38,581	38,609	38,639	38,660	38,669
Consumer prices of goods and services year/year	685.8	170.3	143.0	135.3	132.2	127.8	119.9	114.9	111.8
December/December	349.3	160.4	144.3	137.6	129.5	121.6	118.5	113.2	108.6

1 Source: International Statistics Quarterly 2/1999, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, June 1999.

2 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Survey of Europe, 1999, No 1.

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Indicator a - preceding year=100		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Average real net wages/ salary in the national economy	a	75.6	99.7	97.3	97.1	100.5	103.0	105.7	107.3	105.1
Including the enterprise sector	a	x	x	96.4	98.7	104.2	103.4	105.9	106.8	104.8
In the state sector	a	85.3	89.6	96.3	94.6	99.2	105.0	106.8	108.5	105.1
Average real workers' pensions, derivative pensions and veterans' pensions	a	84.9	114.5	93.5	97.1	102.9	103.3	102.5	106.2	103.6
Dwellings completed (in thousands)		134.2	136.8	133.0	94.4	76.1	67.1	62.1	73.7	73.4
Global agricultural production (constant prices)	a	97.8	98.4	87.3	106.8	90.7	110.7	100.7	99.8	106.6
Sold industrial production (constant prices)	a		92.0	102.8	106.4	112.1	109.7	108.3	111.5	104.7
Construction and assembly industry production (constant prices)	a	89.3	111.4	106.6	108.0	100.5	108.1	104.6	117.1	109.0
Foreign trade:										
Export in USD millions		14,322	14,903	13,187	14,143	17,240	22,894.9	24,439.8	25,751.3	24,122.0
Imports in USD millions		9,528	15,522	15,913	18,834	21,569	29,049.7	37,136.7	42,307.5	43,529.8
Balance in USD millions		4,794	-619	-2,726	-4,691	-4,329	-6,154.8	-12,696.9	-16,556.2	-19,407.8

Source: National Statistics Office data - www.stat.gov.pl/stale/selected.htm

As the above data indicate, 1998 saw a further drop in inflation and this is true for both year-to-year and December-to-December calculations. The population has grown and wages and retirement pensions have increased, in real terms, since 1990. Increases were noted in industrial production sales and total agricultural production (at constant prices).

Table 1.3 Economic development in 1990-1998

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Inflation rate	480.1	55.3	38.5	30.5	28.4	27.9	18.7	14.0	11.6

Source: Statistical Annuals, 1990-1998, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1990-1998

What provides some grounds for concern is the growing deficit in foreign trade. The liberalisation of foreign trade that has been taking place since 1989 is an important element in economic transformation. All non-tariff barriers were gradually removed during the early 1990s and replaced with import duties. Since 1995, those duties have been systematically reduced and had reached an average of 3.3% by the end of 1998. Total foreign trade turnover, i.e., total export and import turnover in goods and services, reached 52% of gross domestic product by the end of 1998 as compared to 38% in 1990[3]. Since 1990, trade relations with the European Union have been significantly reinforced.

3 Calculated by the International Labour Organisation Task Force on the basis of data from the National Bank of Poland and the International Monetary Fund.

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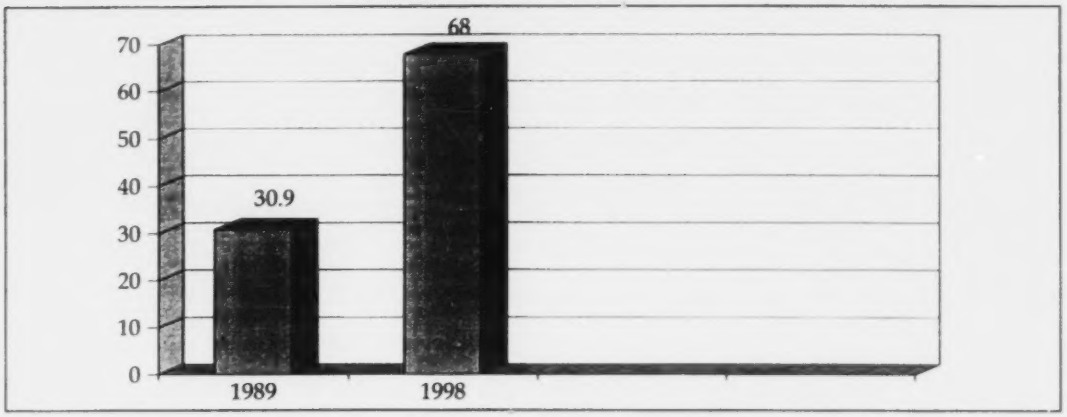
Chart 1.1 Changes in exports from Poland to the European Union, 1989-1998 (%)



Source: National Statistics Office, Foreign Trade Statistical Annual, Warsaw, 1998

The opening up of the Polish economy to foreign capital and, in particular, to foreign direct investment marks another important stage in the transformation of the economy. Under current legislation, in principle, Polish and foreign investors enjoy equal treatment. There are only a few exceptions to this rule and they relate to restrictions on the ownership of shares in companies involved in some telecommunication services and in broadcasting. In 1998, the total value of Foreign Direct Investment reached USD 5.1 billion, from a starting point of almost zero in 1989. According to National Statistics Office data, in 1997, the share in the economy of enterprises owned by foreigners amounted to 9.7% of total production and 4.5% of the total employed.

Privatisation is another important element in the transformation of the Polish economy. To date, this has been implemented as a multi-phase process of gradual transfer of ownership and employment from the public to the private sector. Changing patterns in ownership have been the result of two parallel, but independent, phenomena:

- the establishment of new private enterprises; and
- the development of previously established enterprises.

Outcomes of privatisation include the development of the private sector and an increase in its contribution to the national economy. Poland's privatisation programme is characterised by the diversity of instruments used, which include capital privatisation, privatisation through liquidation, the National Investment Funds Programme, privatisation through restructuring, the Stabilisation Programme, the Restructuring Programme and the Privatisation Programme.

Table 1.4 Changes in the ownership of state enterprises, 1990-1998

	1990-1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
	No of enterprises							
In the individual year	1,258	1,402	1,271	803	501	362	297	235
Total or cumulative number of enterprises privatised	1,258	2,660	3,931	4,734	5,235	5,597	5,864	6,129

Source: Privatisation of State Enterprises in 1998, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999

There were still 1,818 fully operational state enterprises at the end of 1998. The first stage of the National Investment Funds programme was completed in 1998. A total of 512 sole share-holder companies of the state treasury participated in the programme. The stocks or shares of these

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companies were put into National Investment Funds. Shares in National Investment Funds were, in turn, transferred to adult Polish citizens in return for Common Shareholder Certificates. One Certificate corresponded to one share in each National Investment Fund. The process of exchanging Common Shareholder Certificates for shares in National Investment Funds was completed at the end of 1998. Twenty-five point nine million persons exchanged their Certificates for shares.

At the beginning of the 1990s, employers were obliged to pay 20% tax on remuneration. In 1992, this system was changed to a three-point - 20%, 30% and 40% - personal income tax system. Contribution to the pension and retirement funds increased from 38% to 43% in 1990 and to 45% in 1992. Contributions of 2-3% to the Labour Fund were introduced. The current contribution to this Fund is 2.45% of total employment costs.

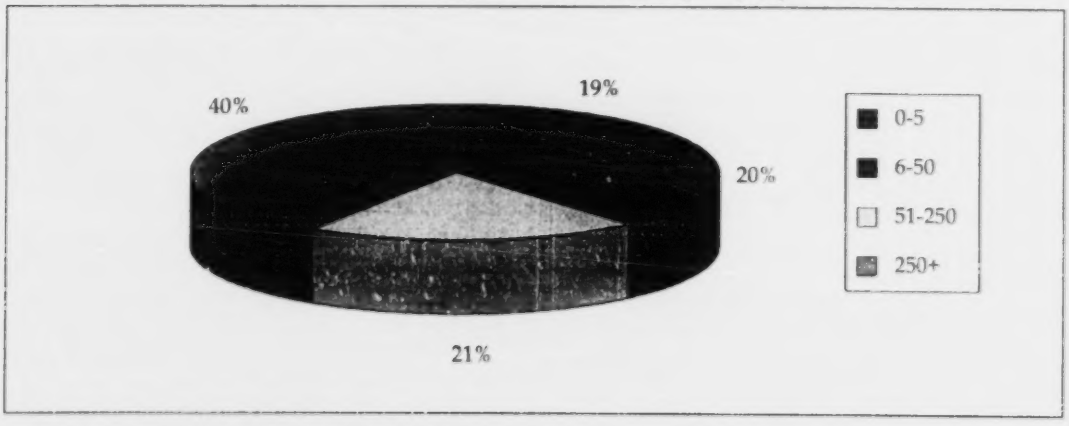
Table 1.5 Remuneration payments as a percentage of employment costs

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Remuneration payments as a percentage of total employment costs	70.4	64.4	67.7	67.4	65.2	63.9	64.2

Source: Litwiński, B. and Sztanderska, H., The labour market in Poland in 1993-1995

The rapid development of the small and medium-sized enterprise sector after 1989 is another spectacular effect of transformation. According to the Ministry of Economy[4], a small enterprise is one which employs less than 50 persons and whose income is lower than EUR 7 million. Medium-sized enterprises employ 50-250 persons and have an income of less than EUR 40 million. The number of enterprises registered in the REGON system increased from 1,890,000 to 2,546,000. In the period 1991-1996, the number of small and medium-sized enterprises multiplied by a factor of five and micro-enterprises, i.e., enterprises with less than 5 employees, by a factor of six. There is a high turnover among small and medium-sized enterprises: in 1996, 623,000 new small and medium-sized enterprises were registered while, in the same year, as many as 353,000 small and medium-sized enterprises closed down. In 1997, 99.76% of all enterprises registered in Poland were small and medium-sized enterprises[5]. The share of small and medium-sized enterprises in the total number of persons working in the national economy grew from 55.7% in 1993 to 66.1% in 1997.

Chart 1.2 Enterprises by number of employees



Source: Government Policy Towards Small and Medium-sized Enterprises up to 2002. www.cup.gov.pl/WWW_MSP/Polit_MS.htm

4 www.cup.gov.pl/WWW_MSP/Definicja.htm

5 Unless otherwise stated, all data in this section is derived from "Government Policy Towards Small and Medium-sized Enterprises until 2002", www.cup.gov.pl/WWW_MSP/Polit_MS.htm

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According to estimates by the Socio-Economic Research Unit of the National Statistics Office and the Polish Academy of Science, the contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises to gross domestic product reached a level of around 40% in 1996, while their contribution to overall gross value-added fluctuated around 46%. These data provide grounds for stating that small and medium-sized enterprises have started to play the key role in the national economy in Poland, as they do in Member States of the European Union.

The general objective of government policy for small and medium-sized enterprises is "to provide favourable conditions for the creation and effective use of the development potential of these enterprises". Instruments introduced to achieve this objective include, *inter alia:*

- the development of a system for consulting enterprises;
- the improvement and development of a credit guarantee system;
- the alleviation of legal and organisational obstacles; and
- the facilitation of access to specialised knowledge on enterprise management.

Responses to a questionnaire addressed to small and medium-sized enterprises in 1998 by the Ministry of Economy are worth quoting as an interesting addendum to statistical data. Enterprises interviewed indicated, in particular, that insufficient demand was one of the most important factors hampering their development. Financial arrangements were also perceived as highly unfavourable to small and medium-sized enterprises. In the first half of 1998, stable employment was observed in micro-enterprises, while that in small enterprises dropped slightly. Some 15% of the small and medium-sized enterprises surveyed had hard-to-fill vacancies. Given total employment in small and medium-sized enterprises, these data reveal the existence of an employment reserve and indicate the need to adjust job offers better.

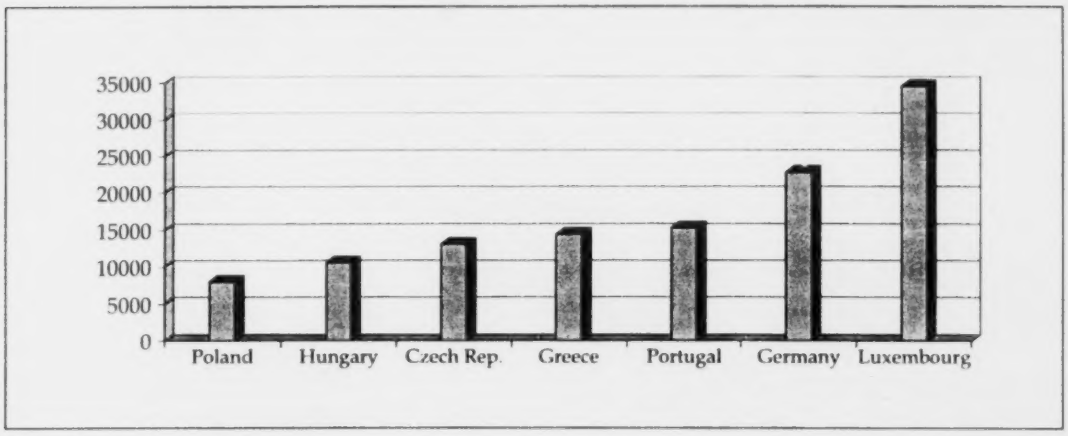
One of the most important socio-economic problems in Poland is the situation in rural areas, which cover more than 93% of Polish territory and are inhabited by 38.1% of the population. Almost thirty per cent of the population live on farms and as many as 77.8% of these live on small farms of less than 10 hectares.

Agriculture employs 28% of the working population or 23 persons per 10 hectares. The average employment in agriculture in the European Union is 5%. Only some 7% of farmers are involved in economic activities outside agriculture and only 16% of farm-owners are part-time farmers. In the European Union, around 30% of farm-owners have additional jobs outside the farming sector.

According to 1996 data, only 2% of the population living on farms are university graduates and only 17% have a full secondary education. More than 28.4% have only vocational education and as many as 52% have only primary education or less. Hidden unemployment and underemployment is widespread in rural areas and an estimated one million people are affected by it. These data show that there is a huge development gap between rural and urban areas and that the rural population is relatively underprivileged. According to the BAEL (Labour Force Survey), unregistered work is a widespread phenomenon. Research conducted in August 1998 revealed that 1,431,000 persons were engaged in unregistered work. This is equal to 9% of the officially employed. Most of the people working in the black economy regarded this kind of work as additional. For 600,000 people, however, it was their only work. Unregistered work is, usually, casual: two thirds of the respondents who were involved in the black economy worked for no longer than 20 days a year. A comparison with similar research carried out in 1995 indicates that there has been a rapid decrease in unregistered work. The number of people admitting that they carried out such work decreased by 768,000.

Despite uninterrupted economic growth, the effects of the underdevelopment of the economy in the pre-1989 period and of economic breakdown in the early years of transformation are still evident. Per capita income is relatively low compared to other countries and stands at 40% of the European Union average in purchasing power parity.

Chart 1.3 Gross domestic product per capita, Poland, selected European Union Member States and some Central and Eastern Europe accession countries (in USD, with purchasing power parity taken into account)



Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Basic Economic Indicators, April 1999

With such low levels of income, consumption aspirations are hard to satisfy and any attempt to improve the living standards of the poorest groups or finance the development of some aspect of public life through redistribution inevitably leads to what is often referred to as "poverty sharing". Another challenge facing the Polish economy is the persistent high rate of unemployment. This problem will be definitively resolved only if 3-4 million new jobs are generated in the years to come.

It is for this reason that continuing and rapid economic growth, at a rate faster than in the European Union, is the only way Poland can reduce the gap, including the gap in education, between it and better developed countries[6].

In addition to economic growth, employment and unemployment forecasting is another critical factor for the planning of changes in the education system. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy's *"Strategy for employment growth and human resource development"* includes a multi-variant forecast on possible shifts in the structure of employment.

All variants foresee:

- a significant drop, from 26% to 18-20% in 2006, in employment in the primary sector, agriculture and forestry;
- a slight drop, from 29% to 27%, in employment in the secondary sector, construction and industry; and
- an increase, from 45% to 53-55%, in employment in the tertiary sector.

These data should be compared with those for the Member States of the European Union to show how immense the changes that still need to be introduced in Poland are. The shares of the different sectors in the employment structure in the European Union in 1995 were 4.4%, 16.7% and 78.9%, for

6 "Strategy for Public Finance and Economic Development", Council of Ministers, 1999.

the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors respectively. Eliminating the huge difference in employment in the tertiary sector will necessitate a significant increase in employment and this is an important challenge for the education system, especially in underdeveloped and rural areas.

1.2 *Regional development*

Disparities in income levels are being exacerbated by the varying levels and rates of economic development in the different regions. However, it must be stressed that regional diversification in Poland is very like that in European Union Member States. In 1998, per capita income in Warsaw was three times that in the poorest regions, Suwałki, Olsztyn and Koszalin. There are even wider and increasing differences in the labour market in the different regions (see Chapter 1.5). The danger of unbalanced development is, therefore, very real.[7]

The susceptibility of regions to change is varied and is not always directly dependent on clearly definable factors. Regional structures can be divided into those which are "crisis generating" and those which are conducive to expansion[8].

The first group includes regions that are characterised by:

- a predominance of agriculture with an obsolete structure;
- a predominance of obsolete industrial production;
- an underdeveloped infrastructure;
- a lack of local initiative and entrepreneurship; and
- a concentration of economic mono-structures.

The second group includes regions that are characterised by:

- a comparatively greater diversity of economic structures, particularly agricultural and industrial structures;
- a relatively well developed service sector;
- a developed infrastructure;
- well developed entrepreneurship and local activities;
- a concentration of human resources with higher education potential; and
- active local economic entities.

As a result of changes introduced in the course of transformation, there are now two types of regions where the need for state intervention is particularly high[9]:

- regions whose economic structure is dominated by traditional industry, which is in need of in-depth restructuring, i.e., Wałbrzych, Łódź, Upper-Silesia and some regions in Central and Southern Poland; and

7 Klasik, A. "Poland's regional development policy in the context of European integration and the 21st Century", Regional Policy – Experience and State of Research, Report of the 20th Council on Socio-economic Strategy, Council of Ministers, Warsaw, 1996.

8 Szlachta, Jacek, "Regional regularities in the transformation process", Regional Development in Poland, F. Ebert Foundation, Warsaw, 1994.

9 Rybicki, M. "Basic trends in regional policy in Poland", Regional Development in Poland, F. Ebert Foundation, Warsaw, 1994.

- underdeveloped, predominantly agricultural, regions in North-eastern and Northern Poland.

State intervention policy towards the regions makes use of a wide variety of instruments, including targeted subsidies from the state budget. The subsidies are aimed at supporting infrastructural investment in *gminas*, i.e., communities, with high structural unemployment and are channelled through public works programmes. Expenditure for this purpose in 1998 reached PLN 65 million[10]. This instrument aims at achieving two objectives:

(a) an economic objective of promoting the development of a technical infrastructure that would encourage further investment; and

(b) a social objective of providing more subsidised employment for the unemployed.

In 1998, this instrument was being used in 406 *gminas* in 18 voivodships.

Active labour market policy is financed, mainly, by the Labour Fund (see Chapter 1.5). Some projects of national importance are financed by the central budget.

Regional policy in Poland is implemented by a network of specialised agencies, such as the Polish Agency for Regional Development, the Industrial Development Agency, the Agency for the Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture, the State-owned Agricultural Property Agency and other agencies and foundations for regional development.

The most important change in regional policy is the public administration reform, which was introduced in 1998. A new level of administration, the *powiat*, has been created. Some competencies and resources have been devolved from the central administration to local government at voivodship and *powiat* levels. At the same time, the number of voivodships has been reduced from 49 to 16.

1.3 *Demography*

Poland's population was 38,667,000 at the end of 1998 and had increased by only 7 thousand as compared to the previous year. For the last four years, the rate of increase in population has stabilised at a very low level – less than 0.1% – compared to 0.9% in the 1980s. This is true of both urban and rural areas. The most important reason for the low rate of increase is the very low birth rate, which, in 1998, was 1.43. Generation replacement is only ensured if the birth rate is at a level of 2.1–2.15.

In terms of population size, Poland is the 29th largest country in the world and the ninth largest in Europe. Population density, 124 people per km^2, is in the medium range. Sixty-two per cent of the inhabitants live in 835 incorporated urban areas, including five new towns which emerged in 1998. Half of the urban population lives in 42 cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and 33% of the population live in 20 cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants. There are five cities with a population of over 500,000. The biggest city is Warsaw, the capital, whose population of 1,618,000 has been decreasing by an annual rate of 0.3% since 1991. Net immigration from rural to urban areas in 1998 was 9,000 people and was the lowest for the last 50 years.

Life expectancy has been increasing continuously since 1992. Average life expectancy is 77.3 for women and 68.9 for men born in 1998. Compared to 1990, average life expectancy increased by 2.4 years for men and 1.8 for women. The difference in life expectancy between men and women is higher than the European average by 5-6 years and reached 8.5 years in 1998.

10 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, "Information on the implementation and financing of infrastructural investment subsidised from the state budget reserve for 1998", Warsaw, May 1999.

Polish society is young compared to other European countries. The median age is 36.7 years for men and 33 years for women. Among the factors that have contributed to the ageing of the population are:

- the decreasing birth rate;
- the transition of baby-boomers from one age group to another; and
- the increases in life expectancy mentioned above.

Poland is ethnically homogenous. Poles constitute more than 97% of the population. The remaining nationalities and ethnic groups in Poland are:

- Germans, 0.8%, who are concentrated in the regions of Pomerania and Silesia;
- Ukrainians, 0.65%, the majority of whom reside in the western part of Poland; and
- Byelorussians, 0.53%, who live in the Bialostockie voivodship.

In addition, there are small groups of Romanies (0.06), Lithuanians (0.05%), mainly in the Suwalskie voivodship, Slovaks (0.05%) and Jews (0.04%). The present ethnic homogeneity in Poland is the result of the large-scale resettlements, which took place after the Second World War, and the Nazi extermination of more than 90% of Polish Jews. Due to the border changes after the Second World War, 5.5 million Germans were resettled from Polish territories and Ukrainians were forcibly settled in the western parts of Poland.

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland guarantees equal rights to national minorities. They are entitled to develop their culture and traditions, have access to education in their mother tongue and study their mother tongue in primary and secondary schools. They publish magazines in the national and ethnic minority languages and have their representatives in the Polish parliament.[11]

The level of education of the population improved in the 1990s. The most important factor here is a rapid decrease, from 28.1% in 1990 to 21% in 1995, in the proportion of the population of working age who have only primary education. The share of those with at least secondary education has risen from 39% in 1990 to 44% today. Women usually attain slightly higher levels of education than men. There is a wide divergence in education levels in the different regions. The urban population has a clearly higher level of education than the rural population. In 1996, 45% of the urban population aged over 15 had secondary education[12], compared to only 20% of the rural population.

Demographic forecasts indicate changes that will be of great importance for education policy. In the years to come one can expect:

- a significant drop in the number of school-age children (7-14 years) , which is expected to decrease by 360,000 in the years 1999-2000;
- a slight increase in the number of young people in secondary education (15-18 years), which is expected to rise by 20,000 in the years 1999-2000; and
- an increase in the number of young people in the 19-24 age group, which is expected to increase by around 90,000 in the years 1999-2000.

These data show that the decision to undertake the reform of the education system in the years 1999-2000 was timely. The relatively small numbers of school-age children and young people will make the reform process much easier. However, the timing of the reform also means that quite a number of school-leavers will not benefit from it and those who are now in the 7th year of elementary school and older children will be entering the labour market with relatively poor skills.

11 A. Rajkiewicz, "Polish society in 1989-1994" , Warsaw, 1996.

12 Not counting vocational education.

These form a group of 4,379,000 people and the need to improve their chances of employment when they leave the school system will certainly be a great challenge. Participation in higher education increased from 12.9% in the 1990/91 school year to 33.5% in 1998/99.[13]

Attention should also be drawn to the fact that, in the period 1995-2000, there will be a significant net increase of 2,000,000 people, more than 8%, in the labour force in Poland.

1.4 *Social protection*

At the start of the process of social reform, Poland already had a developed social security system. However, the economic crisis and the social protection measures that were introduced when the economy was being restructured have contributed to a significant increase in the proportion of gross domestic product that goes on social expenditure. Social transfers have also increased in relation to other public expenditure – from 44% in 1990 to 65% in 1995. Pensions, whose share in gross domestic product increased from 6.5% in the 1980s to 14.5% in the second half of the 1990s, are the most important form of social transfer. The main cause of the sharp increase in pension costs was the increase in the number of pensioners. This, in turn, was caused by a reduction of the effective retirement age to an average of 57 and the widespread use of early retirement schemes for workers made redundant in privatised and restructured industry.

In recent years, the importance of social welfare has been growing proportionally to the increase in poverty. The number of families in receipt of welfare assistance has also been growing. In 1998, 2,123,420 persons received various forms of assistance. This was 4.4% more than in 1997. In 1998, 5.5% of the total population or 550 persons out of every 10,000 were in receipt of social assistance.

Eligibility for welfare assistance in 1996-1998 was based, mainly, on unemployment and inability to bring up children or run a household. Other criteria included chronic illness, homelessness, disability and impoverished single-parenthood. On the other hand, the number of large families and of mothers-in-need, as a proportion of the total number of welfare recipients, has declined.

The Social Welfare Act, which is the legal basis for the activities of the social services, lays down that the organisation of welfare assistance for those in need is the responsibility of public authorities, at both government and local levels. In fact, social welfare is organised, mainly, at *gmina* level. A well-developed network of non-governmental organisations complements the welfare services organised by the state. Welfare expenditure is very difficult to calculate from the statistical yearbooks[14]. However, it is possible to establish that, in the period 1990-1995, the proportion of gross domestic product involved in total public expenditure on social assistance dropped from 1.5% to 0.8%. The contribution of *gmina* budgets to total public expenditure on social assistance stabilised, in the second half of the 1990s, at around 28%.

1.5 *Labour market*

Since the very beginning, the restructuring of the economy in Poland was characterised by two labour market-related trends: a decrease in employment and the emergence of registered unemployment. Between 1990 and 1993, the number of people working in the national economy decreased by 2,628,000 – from 17,389,000 to 14,761,000. In 1994, employment started to grow and had

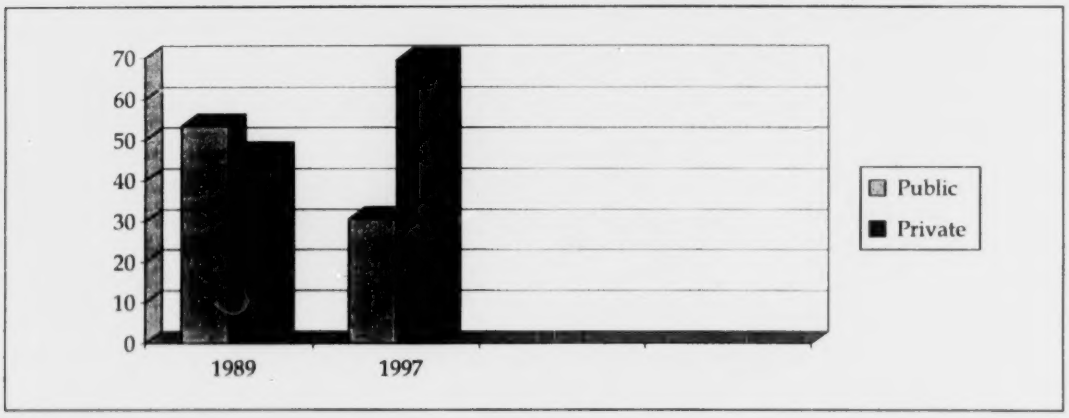
13 Statistical Annual 1999, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

14 Golinowska, S., "Public expenditure for social purposes", IPiSS Report, Warsaw, 1996.

increased by 1,114,000 by 1997. This upward trend ended in 1998, when employment fell by 134,000, compared to 1997, due to a slowdown in the rate of growth of gross domestic product and the Russian crisis, which led to employment cuts in "eastern-oriented" small and medium-sized enterprises.

The growing importance of the private sector has been the prevalent feature of the labour market in Poland since 1990. The number employed in this sector grew by 2.9 million between 1989 and 1997, though this was not enough to compensate for cuts in the public sector, where 4.4 million jobs were lost. The structure of employment, in terms of ownership, has changed irreversibly.

Chart 1.4 Changes in the structure of employment by ownership



Source: Privatisation of State Enterprises in 1998, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999

1.5.1 Development of the wage formation system

Wage policy has always been among the most important considerations in the restructuring of the economy in Poland. In 1990, a very restrictive wage-tax was imposed: any wage increase above the fixed limit was subject to a tax amounting to 500% of the excess value. This policy was aimed at counteracting pressure from the workforce to increase wages in state enterprises and was abolished in 1994. Government wage policy is currently determined by the Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Affairs, a body composed of representatives of the government, trade unions and employer organisations. The limits of wage increases in the public sector are determined on the basis of macroeconomic indicators. There are, however, no sanctions for those who exceed these limits. As a consequence, actual wage increases are usually higher than the limits set.

Non-wage labour costs are quite high in Poland and constitute an important element of the total cost of employment. Between 1991 and 1998, these rose from 30% to 36%. The growing social security contributions and the introduction of contributions for the Labour Fund and the Guaranteed Employee Compensation Fund also increased total labour costs. The persistent, high level of non-wage labour costs is perceived as reducing the demand for labour and as conducive to the development of a black economy.

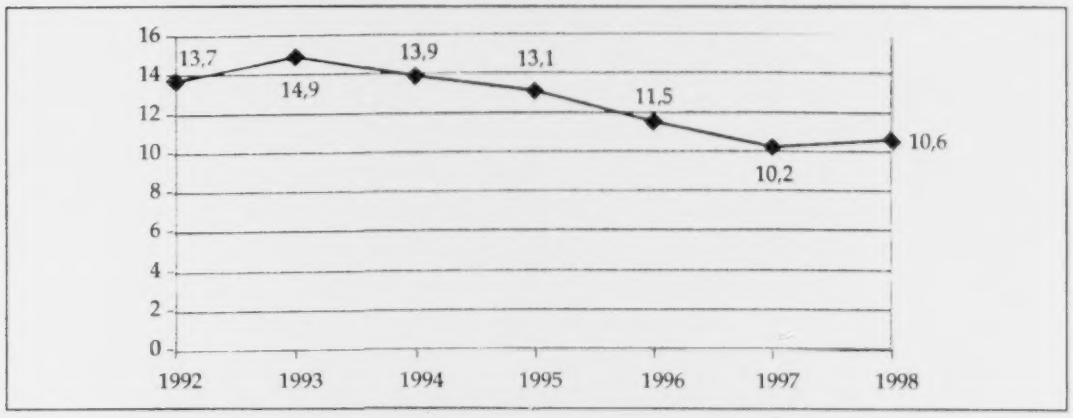
1.5.2 Unemployment

Registered unemployment emerged for the first time in the early 1990s, as a result of the transformation of the economy. In both 1990 and 1991, the number of unemployed increased by one million. This was, largely, a result of very liberal regulations and registration procedures.

In 1993, the number of registered unemployed approached three million and the unemployment rate reached 16.4%. In subsequent years, as a result of economic recovery and the adjustment of unemployment regulations to International Labour Organisation standards, the number of unemployed fell significantly.

By the end of December 1998, 1,831,000 persons were registered as unemployed, 5,000 more than in December 1997, and the unemployment rate was 10.4% or 0.1 percentage point above the December 1997 level. The slight increase in unemployment was due to the Russian crises and a slowdown in the rate of economic growth.

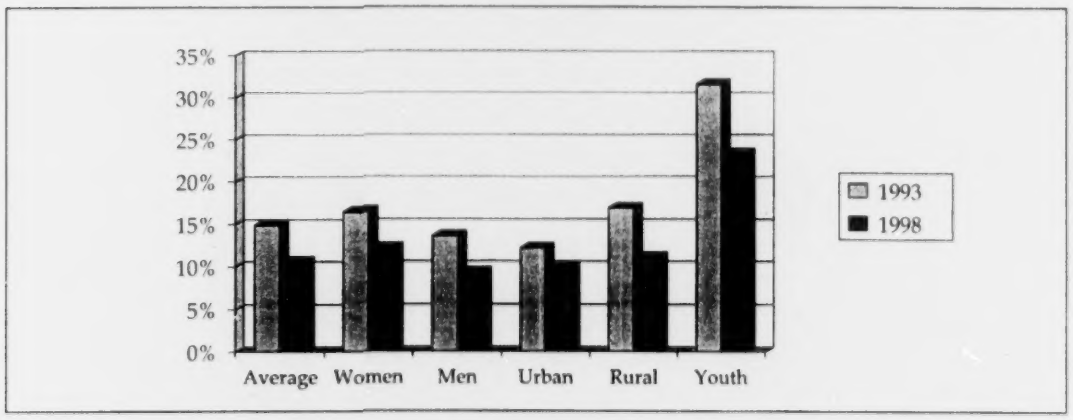
Chart 1.5 The unemployment rate, 1992-1998



Source: Based on the Labour Force Survey (BAEL) results

Labour market dynamics in the 1990s are best illustrated by unemployment inflows and outflows. In the early 1990s, inflows were high and outflows were much lower. In 1994, this trend was reversed and outflows have been greater than inflows ever since.

Chart 1.6 The structure of unemployment



Source: National Statistics Office, Statistical Annual, Warsaw, 1993-1999

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Table 1.6 Labour market fluency, 1992-1998

Year	Inflow	Outflow
1992	1,561.1	1,206.8
1993	1,971.2	1,590.9
1994	2,094.0	2,145.6
1995	2,371.3	2,580.5
1996	2,225.1	2,494.4
1997	2,051.3	2,584.4
1998	2,127.9	2,122.9

Source: Strategy for employment growth and human resources development, MPiPS, Warsaw, 1999

Table 1.6 clearly shows the adverse turn in 1994 that had a negative influence on the situation in the labour market.

Another important indicator of the labour market situation is the number of job offers available.

Table 1.7 Job offers reported by employers to the public employment services, 1992–1998

Year	Job offers (in thousands)	Private sector job offers (%)
1992	483.8	67.8
1993	527.8	73.8
1994	804.0	69.9
1995	914.2	72.7
1996	878.9	74.1
1997	915.8	72.3
1998	761.1	75.3

Source: ibidem.

Table 1.7 illustrates the link between economic growth and the number of job offers, which fell in 1998. It also shows the importance of the private sector in job creation.

The Polish labour market is characterised by very strong regional disparities that continue to grow, despite favourable trends in employment. In 1993, the ratio between the regions with the lowest and highest growth rates in employment was 1:4. These were Warsaw, where the rate of growth was 7.6%, and Suwałki, where it was 30.3%. This doubled to 1:8 in 1998, when the rate was 2.6% in Warsaw and 20.4% in Suwałki. This trend reflects disparities in economic development across regions.

Insufficient growth in economic activity persists in regions whose economies are dominated by formerly public agricultural holdings, i.e., ex-state-owned farms. Other factors contributing to the reinforcement of regional disparities include:

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- very low migration, due to the underdevelopment of a suitable infrastructure;
- the high price of housing in cities; and
- the low skill levels in rural and small town environments and the resultant low wages offered, which is also a disincentive to migration.

The predominance of young people is another characteristic of the Polish labour market. According to demographic forecasts, the number of persons in the 18-24 age group will grow to 4,532,000, or 11.7% of the total population, by the end of 2000. As a consequence, the number of school-leavers entering the labour market is also growing. In the 1997-98 school year, the number of school-leavers was 668,000 - 24,000 more than in the preceding year.

Table 1.8 Structure of unemployment by age group, 1992-1998 (%, end of the year)

Age group	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
15-17 years	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
18-24 years	34.0	34.3	34.5	34.5	31.1	30.8	30.9
25-34 years	29.8	28.5	27.4	27.0	27.3	27.8	27.2
35-44 years	24.7	25.2	25.3	25.1	25.8	26.4	25.8
45-54 years	9.2	9.8	10.6	11.3	13.3	13.3	14.4
55 years and more	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.4	1.7	1.7

Source: Strategy for employment growth and human resource development, MPiPS, Warsaw, 1999.

School-leavers are a specific group among unemployed young people. In 1998, 6% of all registered unemployed were young people leaving post-primary schools. Their number grew by 25,000 compared to 1997 and reached 111,000. The distribution of school-leavers registered as unemployed did not change in 1998: the biggest group, 44%, were graduates of basic vocational schools followed by those leaving vocational secondary and post-lyceum schools, 36.5%.

Table 1.9 School-leavers registered as unemployed by type of school, 1996-1998 (%)

	1996		1997		1998	
	1,000	%	1,000	%	1,000	%
All school-leavers	86.0	100	85.4	100	110.7	100
From higher education schools	3.7	4.3	4.4	5.2	7.3	6.6
From general secondary schools	12.7	14.8	10.3	12.1	13.2	11.9
From vocational secondary and post-lyceum schools	39.6	46.0	32.2	37.7	40.4	36.5
From basic vocational schools	29.2	34.0	37.8	44.3	48.7	44.0

Source: ibidem

The percentage of newly registered school-leavers who took up employment decreased from 44.7% in 1996 to 39.5% in 1997 and 34.9% in 1998.

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Table 1.10 Newly registered school-leavers who took up employment as a percentage of all newly registered school-leavers by level of education

Year	All unemployed school-leavers who took up employment	Level of education			
		Higher-education schools	Comprehensive secondary schools	Vocational secondary schools and vocational colleges	Basic vocational schools
1996	44.7	66.3	33.0	46.9	43.1
1997	39.7	53.5	31.4	42.7	37.1
1998	34.9	46.8	25.2	36.8	33.9

Source: ibidem

Another characteristic of the Polish labour market is the high proportion of the unemployed that are low skilled. Education is a decisive factor in employability at the current stage of economic reform. After 10 years of economic restructuring, the biggest proportion of the unemployed has only elementary or basic vocational education.

Table 1.11 The structure of unemployment by education 1992-1998 (%)

Education	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Higher	3.0	2.3	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.6
Vocational secondary school and post-lyceum school	22.4	21.0	20.1	20.1	20.2	20.0	20.2
General secondary school	7.2	7.1	6.7	6.8	7.2	6.4	6.1
Basic vocational school	37.4	38.4	39.1	39.4	39.0	38.5	38.1
Primary school and less	30.0	31.2	32.2	32.0	32.1	33.8	34.0

Studies of the black economy were undertaken in 1995 and 1998 and showed that there is a downward trend in unregistered employment, which proves that labour relations in the private sector are getting more and more satisfactory. It also shows that there is an improvement in the labour market situation in general.

Table 1.12 People working in non-registered employment as a share in the total number working in the national economy, August to August

	1995			1998		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Total	14.5	17.0	11.5	9.1	11.5	6.2
Percentage for whom the non-registered employment is their primary job	6.3	7.1	5.3	4.2	4.9	3.4
Percentage for whom the non-registered employment is a secondary job	8.2	9.9	6.2	4.9	6.6	2.8

Source: Non-registered employment in Poland, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999

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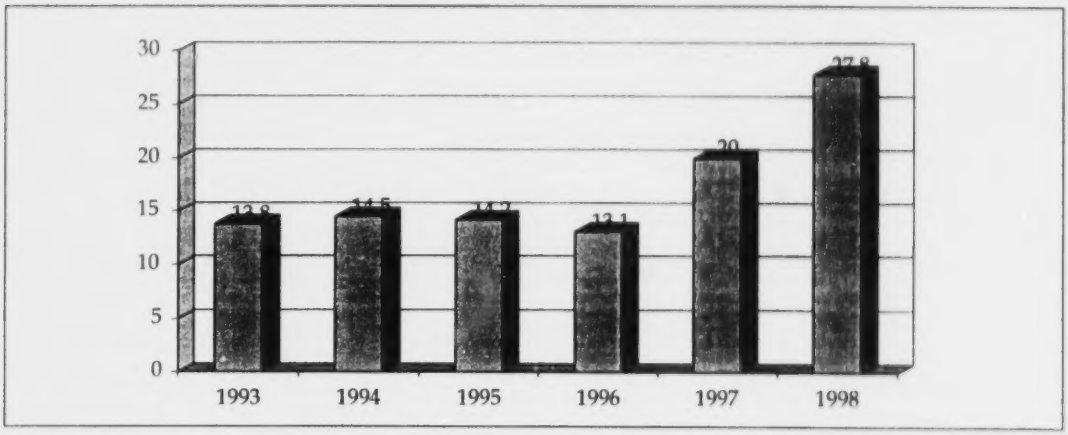
1.5.3 *Employment policy*

The Minister for Labour and Social Policy is responsible for the implementation of active labour market policy. S/he is assisted by the National Labour Office and the network of regional and local labour offices. The main task of active labour market policy is to introduce measures:

- to motivate the unemployed;
- to reduce the level of structural ill-adaptation in the labour market;
- to increase the productivity of the labour force; and
- to check the availability of the unemployed for work.

Active policies are becoming increasingly important in the current situation of economic growth and relatively high unemployment of a predominantly structural nature. This is reflected clearly in data on the structure of expenditure of the Labour Fund, which show that the share of expenditure on active policies is growing[15].

Chart 1.7 Labour Fund expenditure on active policies as a percentage of total expenditures, 1993-1998



Source: Kwiatkowski, E., "Active state policy in the labour market in Poland", State policy in the labour market in the 90s. IPiSS Report, Volume 12, Warsaw, 1998

The data in Chart 1.7 show that the share of expenditure on active measures doubled between 1993 and 1998. There are six active measures financed by the Labour Fund:

1. public job placement and the vocational counselling system;
2. training;
3. subsidised jobs;
4. public works;
5. start-up loans for the unemployed; and
6. job-creation loans for employers to hire the unemployed.

15 The Labour Fund is the targeted fund which was established by the Act on Employment and to Counteract Unemployment to finance expenditure on active and passive labour market policy measures. It is made up of employers' contributions and subsidies from the state budget.

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Three of these measures (1,2 and 5) are designed to assist the unemployed directly, while the other three (3,4 and 6) aim at encouraging employers, including local governments, to create new jobs for the unemployed.

The involvement of the social partners contributes to the effective implementation of active employment policy. The three-layer system of tripartite employment councils – the National Employment Council at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the regional and local Employment Offices – plays an important role in planning active measures and in supervising their implementation. Employment councils are the most important element in the system of co-management. They produce opinions on the distribution of resources to various active measures, initiate individual activities under special programmes and assess the yearly reports of the directors of the labour offices.

Job placement is a fundamental active measure which focuses on the individual unemployed person. It is also the principal task of the public employment services. The job placement service is free of charge and is transparent and accessible to everyone without discrimination. It helps employers to find suitable people to fill job vacancies and job seekers to find suitable jobs. In 1998, some 760,000 job offers were available in labour offices. However, only a small proportion of all vacancies is reported to labour offices. Data for 1995[16] indicate that only 5.6% of the unemployed who took up employment in the period 1990-1994 found work through the labour offices. There is a huge performance gap in this respect and this can only be filled by the adoption of an even more active approach and enhanced flexibility in job placement.

The **vocational counselling** system is directly linked to job placement. Given the dynamic changes in the labour market, more and more job seekers, and even employers, need additional guidance and advice. Under the Act on Employment and to Counteract Unemployment, the labour offices are obliged to offer vocational counselling to anyone who needs it.

In 1998, the labour offices were equipped with specialised software to assist vocational counsellors. This was prepared in co-operation with the World Bank.

Training for the unemployed is another proactive instrument which is directed at unemployed people who cannot find a suitable job because of inadequate education or a lack of the kind of qualifications in demand on the market. The training policy of the labour offices is to meet the current and future needs of employers to the greatest possible extent. These needs are actively researched and studied by labour offices staff. Tripartite training agreements, concluded by the labour office, the unemployed and employer, are among the most effective forms of training. In 1998, more than 141,000 unemployed people underwent training. Courses in job seeking are organised – mostly in job clubs – to motivate the unemployed.

Training for the unemployed and training to prevent unemployment among those who are at work are regulated by the Act on Employment and to Counteract Unemployment.

The Act outlines four basic forms of training for the unemployed:

1. training in new occupations;
2. retraining;
3. training to improve vocational skills; and
4. training in job seeking and in finding employment.

16 Góra, M. , et al., "The Polish Labour Market in 1990-1996", ISP, Warsaw 1997.

The labour offices organise vocational training for the unemployed:

- if the unemployed individual has no vocational qualifications;
- if there is no suitable employment available in the unemployed person's occupation or area of competence; or
- if the unemployed person has lost the ability to work at his/her occupation.

The standard training period is up to 6 months. In particular cases, depending on the duration of the training programme for a particular occupation, it may be extended up to 12 months. One interesting provision is the possibility of applying for a training course of one's own choice provided that there is a high probability of obtaining employment afterwards, e.g., if an employer agrees that s/he will employ the unemployed person when s/he has completed the training programme. The overall cost of such training cannot be more than twice the average monthly wage. The unemployed person is also entitled to obtain from the labour office an interest-free loan of up to four times the average wage to cover the costs of the chosen training. The Labour Fund also covers the costs of training run by employers who can get a refund of up to 50% of the costs incurred. This applies, mainly, to cases of internal restructuring and is aimed at avoiding redundancies.

The system of work placements for graduates is another element in the education of the unemployed. The main objective of work placements is to allow graduates to acquire practical, work-related skills. During the placement period, which can last from three to twelve months, a graduate obtains a grant. The employer offering the work placement incurs no costs and also has an opportunity to test the candidate's skills and suitability for permanent work. It is also possible for the unemployed and the disabled to obtain additional training financed by the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled.

More than 11,000 unemployed were given **start-up loans** in 1998.

Subsidised jobs and public works are the most important forms of job creation financed by the Labour Fund. They are used, not only to increase the number of job offers for unemployed, but also to test their availability for work.

Subsidised employment is aimed at motivating the unemployed and encouraging them in their search for a job and at increasing their chances of finding open-ended employment. Under this programme, labour offices refund part of the wage costs to employers who create additional jobs. In 1998, over 142,000 jobless persons found employment under this scheme.

Public works are organised by local authorities and labour offices to offer the unemployed short-term jobs related to the improvement of local infrastructure. An agency organising public works in an area threatened with high structural unemployment is entitled to a refund of some costs and wages. In 1998, 104,000 unemployed persons were employed under this scheme.

An analysis of the effectiveness of active measures[17] shows that subsidised employment has a positive impact on the movement from unemployment to permanent employment. This was not the case with public works, which indicates that public works cannot be perceived as an active measure but rather as an instrument of income support. Studies on the efficiency of vocational training courses and their impact have yielded interesting, though ambiguous, results. A macroeconomic analysis of results of these studies indicated that the impact of vocational training on the employment of the unemployed was negligible, while a microeconomic analysis did indicate that vocational training has a positive impact on the move from unemployment to permanent employment.

17 Kwiatkowski, E. "Active state policy in the labour market in Poland", State policy on the labour market in the 1990s, IPiSS Report, Volume 12, Warsaw 1998.

In 1998, a new programme for school-leavers, "Absolwent", was launched and a task contract scheme to improve the efficiency of labour market programmes was introduced into the management system of the labour offices.

Table 1.13 Participants in active labour market policy measures (throughout the year) as a percentage of the registered unemployed (at the end of the year), 1994-98

Active labour market policy measure	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Training	3.1	3.1	3.6	7.3	7.7
Subsidised employment	6.9	7.0	5.9	9.1	7.8
Public works	3.9	4.3	4.2	8.2	5.7
Total	13.9	14.4	13.7	24.6	21.2

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Labour 1995, 1997, Materials of the National Labour Office

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2. Modernisation of vocational education and training

The Polish education system has now reached the point of breakthrough. On 1 September 1999, the process of the gradual introduction of the education reform was launched. The policy framework for this reform was set out in the paper *"The basic concept of education reform"* (1998) and has been warmly welcomed by numerous publications[18].

The education reform aims at:

- increasing the numbers of students in secondary and higher education institutions;
- enhancing equal access to education at all levels;
- developing the education role of schools through ensuring an appropriate allocation of time and resources to teaching, the development of skills and personal development;
- increasing the autonomy of schools;
- forging closer links between the school, the family and the local environment; and
- promoting better quality teaching by motivating teachers and by increasing financing for schools.

The reform covers:

- the education structure and the introduction of a new school system;
- curricula and changes in teaching methodology;
- the evaluation and examination system;
- school management and supervision, which needs to be adapted to the new state administration system;
- changes in the financing system; and
- changes in the working conditions and remuneration of teachers.

The following elements of the reform have already been introduced:

- the legal framework and management system;
- the school structure system;
- curricula and methodology; and
- an improvement in the quality of teaching.

The first stage of the reform covers, mainly, the lower levels of education. In secondary and higher education, some adjustments, leading to the second stage of reform, which is to be launched in 2002, have been undertaken.

18 e.g., in expert reports, ordered by the Committee for Education, Science and Technical Development, and published in Głos Nauczycielski (1997) - Kwieciński, Z., *"Common enlightenment"* and Grzelak, J.Ł., *"Project on social change"*.

Education reform is closely linked with the reform of the state administration, which came into effect on 1 January 1999. According to the new Constitution[19], which has introduced the obligation to continue education until the age of 18, the cycle of compulsory general education has been extended to nine years[20]. The former, eight-year primary school programme has been replaced with two levels of education:

- 6-year primary school (7-13 years of age); and
- 3-year *gymnasium* (13-16 years of age).

The purpose of introducing a two-level comprehensive school system is to ensure that the school environment is adjusted better to the development level and needs of children, in the case of primary school, and of adolescents[21]. The gymnasium is a crucial factor in the school reform and ensuring access to one in all local environments will be the main instrument of equal opportunities policy, in particular with regard to young people in rural areas and small towns[22].

The main task of primary schools is to ensure the overall development of children through teaching, skills-development and education in close cooperation with parents[23]. On completion of primary education, children will take a compulsory examination organised by a Regional Examination Committee. The purpose of this examination will be, primarily, informative.

The gymnasium should introduce pupils to scientific knowledge, promote self-reliance, assist them to take decisions on their future education and prepare them for active participation in social life[24]. This stage in the education system should certainly contribute to the creation of the information society in Poland. On completion of the gymnasium, pupils will take a compulsory examination, organised by a Regional Examination Board. Its role will be primarily to determine the direction the child's future education should take. The results of the examination will have a decisive effect on which second-level schools children enrol in.

On 1 September 1999, six-year primary schools and gymnasium schools were put into operation. Parallel to the new system, pupils in the 7th and 8th grades of primary school will continue their education under the previous system.

Also on 1 September 1999, 6,007 gymnasia, with 643,732 pupils, were established[25]. Of these, 5,198 are part of the general system, while 809 are specialised schools to meet the specific education needs of such groups of children as the disabled, those particularly gifted in sports or arts and those belonging to national and ethnic minorities. Of the total number of gymnasia, 5,706, with 638,247 pupils, are public schools and 301, with 5,486 pupils and representing 0.8% of the total, are non-public.

19 *Constitution of the Republic of Poland*, Dz.U., 1997, No 78, item. 483.

20 Act of 08 January 1999 on Provisions to Introduce the Reform of the School System, Dz.U., 1999, No 12, item 96.

21 See the assumptions of the reform in "*Reform of the education system*", MEN, Warsaw, 1998.

22 Ibidem; the Ministry of National Education on curriculum reform in *gymnasia*, Biblioteczka Reformy, Volume 9, Warsaw, 1999; and the Ministry of National Education on education on rural areas, Biblioteczka Reformy, Volume 10, Warsaw, 1999.

23 Regulation of the Minister for National Education of 15.02.1999 on the Curriculum for Comprehensive Education, Appendix 1. The curriculum for comprehensive education in 6-year primary schools and gymnasia, Dz.U 1999, No 14, item 12.

24 Ministry of National Education on curriculum reform in *gymnasia*, op. cit.

25 Data of the Ministry of National Education.

2.1 Organisation of education and training

The description below refers to the structure of the education system before the reform. The data quoted here refer to the 1998/99 school year, the last year before the reform[26]. Special schools and adult education institutions are excluded.

2.1.1 Primary schools

In the 1998/99 school year, there were 18,295 primary schools, with 4,664,411 pupils and 304,205 full-time teachers. This number includes 353 non-public schools, run by societies, organisations, churches and individuals. These had 35,045 pupils, which is 0.7% of the total number of pupils in primary schools.

2.1.2 Post-primary schools

There are three types of school at the post-primary level:

- comprehensive secondary schools,
- vocational secondary schools; and
- basic vocational schools.

In the 1998/99 school year, the total number of pupils in post-primary schools was 2,375,300. Of these, 34% were secondary school pupils. Of the 66% (1,565,500) that were in vocational schools, 40% were attending basic vocational schools and 60%, secondary vocational schools. In the 1997/98 school year, 92.6% of graduates of secondary schools took the final secondary, or *Matura*, examination. Almost eighty per cent passed this examination and became eligible for higher education[27].

Until the second phase of the reform is introduced, admission to secondary schools will continue to be on the basis of entrance examinations. Admission to basic vocational schools is on the basis of the primary school certificate. In exceptional circumstances, e.g., when there are more candidates than places available, admission is on a competitive basis.

2.1.2.1 Secondary school

This type of school offers general education with the option of a final secondary school examination, the *Matura*, which is more or less the equivalent of A-level examinations. The main function of the secondary school, or lyceum, is to prepare young people for university studies. There are currently 2,003 schools of this type, with 809,860 pupils and 40,424 full-time teachers[28]. There are 405 non-public schools with 40,134 pupils, or 4.9% of the total in secondary schools. Public secondary schools are run by local governments at the district level.

The curriculum is broad-based and comprehensive. Streaming by area and additional optional classes facilitate the acquisition of an education that reflects the particular interests and talents of pupils. The curriculum includes language classes, humanist and social subjects, mathematics, nature and the environment, technical subjects, computer science, aesthetics and physical education.

26 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, GUS, Warsaw, 1999.

27 Data for 1997-98, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

28 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit

The different education streams include the general stream, the extended linguistic stream and the classical, humanistic, mathematical and physical and biological and chemical streams. Optional classes are provided in information science, environmental protection, philosophy and ethics, pedagogy and psychology etc. Secondary schools do not fulfil the function of preliminary vocational guidance and orientation very well both because young people tend to opt for the general profile, which involves the most basic selection of subjects, and because many schools focus on teaching this programme.[29]

On graduation from a secondary school, school-leavers are awarded a graduation certificate and are entitled to take a *Matura* examination, which is not obligatory. Examinations are organised and carried out by the school. Recently, under the New *Maturita* Examination Scheme, the examination system has been modernised by the gradual introduction of external standards. The expectation is that, during the second stage of the reform, a fully external examination system will be introduced and examinations will be organised and carried out by the Central Examination Committee rather than by the individual school[30].

In the 1998/99 school year, 98.8% of graduates took the *Matura* examination and 93.3% passed it, thus becoming eligible to enter higher education institutions[31]. Graduates can continue education at universities, in vocational colleges or in "post-lyceum schools".

2.1.2.2 *Vocational schools*

There are two levels of vocational school at the post-primary level[32]:

- 2,435 basic vocational schools, with 630,662 pupils; and
- 5,225 secondary vocational schools, with 934,869 pupils.

Secondary vocational schools include:

- vocational lycea;
- secondary technical schools;
- secondary technical schools for graduates of basic vocational schools; and
- the new, experimental technical lycea.

Basic vocational schools

Basic vocational schools provide fundamental, comprehensive and vocational knowledge and skills at manual worker level. The programme takes three years. These schools prepare qualified manual workers for the main sectors of the economy. Upon completion, a certificate is issued. The vocational examination, if passed, confers the vocational title of qualified worker (or journeyman). Graduates may continue their education in secondary schools, on the basis of the knowledge and skills received in vocational schools.

29 ibid.

30 Regulation of the Minister for National Education of 19 April 1999 on Rules for the Evaluation, Classification and Programming of Pupils and Students and on Examination Procedures in Public Schools, Dz.U. 1999, Nr. 41, poz 413.

31 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

32 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

The new regulations[33] have separated schools certificates and vocational titles. That is why vocational examinations on the completion of school are no longer compulsory. School certificates enable graduates to continue their education in a secondary school, while vocational titles give them a better chance of employment. Holders of certificates may take vocational examinations in out-of-school continuing vocational education structures.

Vocational lycea

Vocational lycea are a combination of secondary school and basic vocational school. The *Matura* examination may be taken upon graduation, as can vocational examinations at the skilled manual worker level. Both of these are optional. The vocational lycea prepare skilled manual and non-manual workers for industry, agriculture, the construction industry, commerce, services and administration. The programme takes four years. The graduation certificate alone does not guarantee access to higher education as the *Matura* examination is a prerequisite for those who want to continue their education at this level.

Secondary technical schools

Secondary technical schools offer both comprehensive and vocational education at the secondary level. The *Matura* and vocational examinations, which confer the title of technician in the occupation in question, are optional. These schools prepare skilled personnel for technical, agricultural, economic and commercial occupations, as well as for work in administration, culture and the arts. Depending on the occupation, the course takes four, four and a half or five years. The secondary school graduation certificate is issued upon completion. However, only those who have *Matura* certificates may continue their education in higher education institutions.

Secondary technical schools for graduates of basic vocational schools

Secondary technical schools are open to graduates of basic vocational schools and are designed for young people who, on completion of basic vocational school, decide to continue their education at the secondary level. Their functions are as described above. The programmes offered by these schools last two, two and a half or three years.

Technical lycea

Technical lycea provide secondary comprehensive education and broad-based vocational education. No professional title can be obtained. The *Matura* examination can be taken at the end of the programme. These schools are aimed at offering a flexible vocational profile, which is a good basis for further specialisation. Courses are available in 12 vocational profiles: environmental studies; forestry and wood processing; agriculture and food processing; electricity and power engineering; electronics; mechanics; chemistry; textiles; communication and transport; services; business and administration; and social services.

2.1.3 *Post-lyceum vocational education*

Post-lyceum vocational education is delivered in post-lyceum vocational schools and in teacher training colleges.

33 Regulation of the Minister for National Education of 19 April 1999 on Rules for the Evaluation, Classification and Programming of Pupils and Students and on Examination Procedures in Public Schools, Dz.U. 1999, Nr. 41, poz 413.

Post-lyceum vocational schools offer courses to upgrade or change the vocational qualifications of graduates of comprehensive secondary schools. They also offer specialisation courses. The courses last from two to two and a half years and the profiles offered include: technical sciences; agriculture; economics and commerce; administration; general services; medical and social services; and culture and the arts. The vocational exam, if taken, confers the title of technician in the occupation in question. Some schools offer one-year courses, leading to a qualified worker title.

In the 1997/98 school year, new, more flexible, module-based courses were introduced for graduates of technical lycea. The profiles offered are the same as those listed above but the education cycles are shorter and last from six to eighteen months.

Day, evening and extramural courses are available. There are 2,080 post-lyceum vocational schools, with 202,826 students[34] in Poland.

Teacher training colleges

Teacher training colleges were first introduced in 1990 as a response to the shortage of qualified teachers in certain fields. They prepare teachers for kindergartens, primary schools and some other education institutions. Foreign language colleges are of special importance due to the serious shortage of Western language teachers in all types and levels of schools. The course lasts three years and ends with a professional examination. Graduates receive diplomas in higher vocational education and may continue higher education at a university, if they have obtained the title of licentiate at the university in question. It is up to the university to set the criteria for the award of the title. If only an examination is necessary, the curriculum followed in the teacher-training course may prove to be sufficient. However, some universities oblige candidates for this title to undergo some additional courses.

2.1.4 *Higher vocational education*

Before the 1990s, vocational education finished at the level of post-secondary schools, which were, and still are, classified as second-level schools. In legal terms, the concept of higher vocational education first appeared in 1997, when the Act on Higher Vocational Schools came into force. Under this Act, public higher vocational schools were established. Their aim was to provide vocational skills in 30 professions in accordance with local labour market needs.

Even before the 1997 Act, non-public higher vocational schools had started to emerge under the Act on Higher Education of 12 September 1990. In the 1998/99 school year, there were 158 such schools and their number has been growing ever since[35]. They organise mainly three-year courses, leading to a licentiate examination. Only 26 of these schools are authorised to organise master courses. Most non-public schools are small and have few full-time personnel. In the 1998/99 school year, the number of students in non-public higher vocational schools amounted to 330,947 or 26% of all higher education students[36].

In the 1998/99 school year, 17 new schools were established and started operations under the Act on Higher Vocational Schools. There were 10,575 students in these schools[37].

34 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

35 *"Higher education Institutions and their financing in 1998"*, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

36 ibid.

37 ibid.

In 1991, the process of diversification of the courses offered by academic institutions was started. The uniform cycle of five-year Master of Arts and Master of Science studies has been gradually replaced by a multi-level system. A wider use is made of technical, engineer-level studies and of three-year licentiate programmes.

The following types of vocational studies are conducted by public and non-public higher vocational schools.

- *Four-year programmes*, leading to an engineer-level examination, are provided, mainly, in technical, agricultural and economic academies.
- *Three-year vocational studies*, ending with a licentiate examination, are provided in both state-run and non-public higher education institutions. These studies are most often organised in economics and the natural sciences and are most common in non-public higher education institutions.
- *Three-year teacher training courses*, ending with a licentiate examination, are organised, mainly, at universities and higher education institutions for teachers.

  Licentiate and engineer programmes are comparable with bachelor study programmes in Western universities. Licentiate programmes are more practical in orientation. There are several exceptions, which is quite understandable since these three-year programmes are still involved in a search for identity.

Graduates of both four- and three-year programmes are entitled to continue their education at two-year courses ending with a master examination.

2.2 *Main features of the vocational education and training system*

2.2.1 *General characteristics*

2.2.1.1 *The school-based vocational education system*

Vocational education is the main sector in post-primary education and is based on three types of schools:

- basic vocational schools;
- secondary vocational schools; and
- post-lyceum schools.

Secondary vocational education is carried out in schools, with some practical training courses being organised extramurally.

There are two kinds of basic vocational education. One is based on a *school schedule*, where schools organise full-time courses, schoolchildren have the status of pupils and practical training is organised in school workshops or, in the case of agricultural schools, on school farms. The other is based on *a dual schedule*, where schoolchildren have the status *of juvenile workers employed for the purpose of practical training*. Theoretical courses are held in school and/or a training centre and practical instruction is provided by the employer.

Of the young people attending basic vocational schools, 305,789 are covered by the *school schedule* while 324,873 are covered by the *dual schedule*[38]. The vast majority of young people covered by the *dual schedule* are employed by small enterprises, mainly in handicrafts, commerce, catering, the construction industry and production. Big enterprises, particularly those in the production sector, are not interested in participating in the system of vocational education and training. This is a serious obstacle to the provision of practical training in advanced technologies and modern work organisation.

There is a mismatch between the vocational education and training system and the social and economic environment[39]. The closed system of school-based education is much less responsive to changes in the economy and on the labour market. The transformation of the economy has weakened, if not ended, co-operation between schools and employers, which was far from perfect even under the old regime. No new mechanisms to support this co-operation have been developed.

2.2.1.2 *Two basic principles*

There are two important principles underlying the functioning of vocational schools:

- the permeability of education; and
- the simultaneous provision of comprehensive and vocational/technical education.

Because of these two principles, vocational schools have the double function of providing both vocational qualifications and comprehensive knowledge, so that students can continue their education at a higher level. This double function, which has its own theoretical justification, is based on the old-fashioned idea of combining comprehensive and vocational education. An analysis of curricula shows, however, that teaching in vocational schools is subject-oriented and covers a wide range of subjects. Theoretical and practical courses are linked, as far as content is concerned, but they are organised separately and are given by teachers who belong to different categories and have different qualifications.

2.2.1.3 *Broad profile of vocational education*

The modernisation of vocational education in the 1990s was based on the principle of broad-based education. This marked a distinct break from the narrow specialisation model of education that had been dominant up to the early 1990s and is still functioning to a certain extent.

The idea of broad-based profiles is that they support flexibility and vocational mobility throughout one's career. A new classification of occupations for the purposes of vocational training was prepared in 1993 and revised in 1997. New curricula, based on the model of broad education profiles, were developed but, because of delays, were put into practice only in the 1997/98 school year[40].

The parallel modernisation of general education, which is another component of vocational education, is expected to contribute to an improvement in the level of general knowledge acquired in vocational schools. It should also be conducive to the elimination of the "encyclopaedic" approach to education and of teaching based on the simple, conservative canon of education as "transmission of knowledge".

38 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit., calculated on the basis of data on the total number of young persons in basic vocational education and on the number of juvenile workers.

39 See the evaluation of the vocational education system in *"Nationwide meeting of vocational education representatives"*, Katowice 98. Biuletyn, Kuratorium Oświaty w Katowicach, Katowice, February 1999; *"Ministry of National Education on vocational education"*, Biblioteka Reformy, Zeszyt 3. Warsaw, February 1999.

40 Circular of the Ministry of National Education to principal teachers (PKZ i V3-4016-61/97 PM) of 21 May 1997.

The new curriculum in general education[41] which was introduced in the 1999/2000 school year put equal emphasis on the three fundamental tasks of general education: the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It focuses on fundamental skills and abilities, such as the ability to plan and organise one's own learning process, the ability to communicate efficiently, to co-operate within a team, to solve problems creatively, to search and use information from many different sources, to use information technology, to develop one's interests and to deal with conflicts through negotiating. This is the first step towards the integration of vocational and general education.

The curriculum in vocational schools is composed of:

- general education;
- theoretical vocational education; and
- practical training.

The proportion of each of these components in a specific curriculum depends on the type and level of school. The reform policy is to promote general education and increases its share in vocational education. According to the new regulations[42], general education is to take up 45% of teaching hours in basic vocational schools and 55-60% in secondary schools. As far as vocational education *sensu stricto* is concerned, in basic vocational schools more emphasis is put on practical training than on theoretical classes (60:40), while in secondary schools the share of theoretical classes is much higher.

One of the most serious weaknesses of the system is the vocational structure it inherited from the centrally planned economy. This structure was adapted to the structure of employment in an economy focused on heavy industry, including mining, and with a services sector which was underdeveloped in terms of both quality and quantity. The effects of this structure are still evident in the distribution of pupils and teachers in vocational schools. This can be seen in Table 2.1. [43]

Table 2.1 The structure of vocational schools and the distribution of pupils and teachers

Vocational schools structure	% of pupils and students[43]
Industrial and technical	59.2%
Business and administration	16.6%
Services	14.9%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	7.1%
Artistic professions	1.3%
Communication and transport	0.5%
Medical professions	0.4%

41 Regulation of the Minister for National Education of 15 February 1999 on the Framework Curriculum in Public Schools, Dz. U. 1999, No 14, item 128.

42 Regulation of the Minister for National Education of 15 February 1999 on the Framework Curriculum in Public Schools, Dz. U. 1999, No 14, item 128.

43 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op.cit.

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2.2.2 *Education and training institutions*

The absence of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system, and the resulting lack of reliable statistics in the field of education, makes any attempt at in-depth analysis extremely difficult, if not impossible. There is no documentation on which to base an evaluation of the quality of education provided by various education institutions. Therefore, the review of these institutions has to be limited to some technical issues that may influence the quality of the education they provide.

2.2.2.1 *Public and non-public schools*

The network of vocational schools is quite well developed and covers the entire territory of Poland. The vocational education and training system consists of public and non-public schools. However, vocational schools at post-primary level are mostly public. Out of 7,660 such schools, 7,373 are public. The number of pupils in public schools amounts to 1,541,700, which corresponds to 98.5% of all pupils in post-primary vocational schools[44].

At the post-secondary level, the share of public schools has been decreasing as a result of the rapid development of non-public schools. The network of schools at this level is composed of 2,080 schools with 202,826 students. Of these, 909, with 104,674 students or 51.6% the total, are public[45].

Since January 1999, ***public vocational schools***, with the exception of art schools and some schools of importance to an entire region, have been run by local authorities at the *powiat* level. These schools are usually organised into complexes of schools that include different levels (basic, secondary and post-lyceum) and different types (for young people and for adults) of schools.

The structure, size and number of elements in these complexes may differ. Some are homogenous, i.e., all the schools provide education and training in the same branch, and some are heterogeneous. Other differences include the number and social background of the pupils, the number and qualification levels of staff, differences in infrastructure, equipment etc. These differences result in differences in the quality of teaching. Under these circumstances, any attempt at generalisation would not be justified.

In terms of organisation, there are two main types of vocational school complex. Large complexes are usually homogenous and oriented towards one branch, i.e., agriculture, the construction industry, the mechanics industry, the electricity sector, economy and trade, the garment industry, catering etc. This type of organisation does not lend itself to flexibility and adaptability to the needs of the labour market. Local attempts to restructure these complexes in order to make them more flexible are rarely successful, one of the most important barriers being the qualifications of the teachers.

Small complexes in small towns are more heterogeneous, though the teachers are often not sufficiently qualified. These tend to provide training only in basic occupations and the training available for girls is particularly limited. The organisation of basic vocational education is very ineffective. It is composed of three separate elements: schools with multi-professional classes, vocational improvement centres, which provide theoretical vocational education, and employers, who offer practical instruction. Within this structure, the principle of equal opportunities is questioned and undermined and there is no chance of ensuring a satisfactory quality of teaching.

Larger complexes have a developed infrastructure, which is common to all schools within the complex. This includes: classrooms equipped with basic teaching materials and aids; specialised classrooms for general education subjects; computer rooms; specialised classrooms for vocational

44 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

45 ibidem.

education subjects; laboratories; school workshops; a library; a school gymnasium and sports fields; and social premises, such as clubs, canteens and, in school complexes which are local education centres or dormitories.

Due to the lack of data, it is not possible to present a more detailed description of the infrastructure in vocational schools. It is, however, possible to make some general remarks. There is insufficient investment in vocational schools and they are seriously under-financed. Most of the fixed assets are non-capital assets, 82% of them in school workshops[46], and the average yearly budget does not even cover necessary repairs and refurbishment. Central financing is usually precisely targeted, for example, at computer equipment. Modernisation is only possible thanks to local resources, such as local government financing and resources obtained by schools from their own earnings or income, sponsors, foreign support programmes, voluntary contributions by parents etc. Because the most important source of finance is local, there are wide disparities in the financial standing of schools and their infrastructure.

As mentioned above, the proportion of ***non-public schools*** in the basic and secondary vocational education sector is not high – 287 schools, with 23,565 pupils. At the same time, post-lyceum schools have been developing rapidly and now number 1,171 schools, with 98,153 students[47]. The proportion of students in non-public schools at post-secondary level grew from 6.3% in 1992/93 to 34.1% in 1995/96 and 49.4% in 1998/99.

Non-public schools can obtain the same status as public schools, if they apply the same rules with regard to teachers' qualifications, the classification of occupations, curricula, evaluation, promotion and professional titles. By the same token, they can also receive subsidies from the central budget. At present, 271 non-public, basic and secondary schools and 842 non-public, post lyceum schools have the status of public schools.

Non-public schools are supervised by an education *"kurator"*.

Non-public schools are run by many different bodies, which may be classified into three categories: social organisations and associations; legal entities (individuals, partnerships and foundations); and religious organisations. Social organisations and associations, which run 173 schools, are the main players in non-public basic and secondary vocational education. The post-secondary sector is dominated by legal entities, who run 846 schools, with some schools being run by religious organisations.

Organisations that run the 30,303 non-public vocational schools usually have a long tradition and great experience in the field of education and very good staff. Among them are:

- the Association of Vocational Training Institutes (ZZDZ);
- the Polish Educators Association;
- the Polish Economic Society; and
- the Common Knowledge Society.

The Association of Vocational Training Institutes (ZZDZ) has a very well developed network of centres covering the whole of Poland. In the 1997/98 school year, the Association had 268 post-primary and post-secondary schools[48].

46 Ministry of National Education on Vocational Education, op. cit.

47 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

48 *Association of Vocational Training Institutes*, "Edukacja Dorosłych" 1997, No 2 (17).

The issue of tuition in non-public schools is very controversial and has been on the agenda for some time. Despite quite substantial central budget subsidies to schools with public status, tuition fees in these schools are rather high. In September 1998, the average monthly tuition fee amounted to PLN 196 in secondary vocational schools and PLN 267 in colleges[49]. This is a substantial proportion of the average household budget.

2.2.2.2 *School workshops*

School workshops are an integral part of schools and school complexes. Such workshops are to be found in schools that provide training in occupations in the manufacturing sector, such as technical industries, construction, wood processing, the textile and garment industry and food processing and catering. For training in agriculture, there are school farms instead of workshops.

According to available data for 1998/99, the number of workshops in public vocational education amounted to 886 and covered some 428,000 students[50]. From the point of view of the financing system[51], school workshops have the status of "self-financing enterprises of a state agency". Only the salaries of teachers and trainers are financed from the central budget.

School workshops are designed, mainly, to provide practical instruction for pupils in basic vocational schools, i.e., those in the school schedule system, but they also provide some practical instruction for pupils in secondary vocational and post-lyceum schools.

Classes in school workshops are based on the production of goods and services. Practical instruction should include the coordination of tasks related to production as well as teaching. The production profile of the workshop should be adjusted to market requirements and should become a source of income to finance the operation of the workshop. This idea is, however, very difficult to implement under current circumstances. Equipped with obsolete machines and tools, with a very limited output capacity and no cooperation links with market enterprises, school workshops are barely able to sell their products. This and the lack of effective intervention by education policy in the 1990s have significantly undermined the quality and efficiency of practical vocational education. In the light of the experience of the last decade, school workshops appear to be ineffective and not very useful. The reform[52] aims at having practical instruction take place outside of school, i.e., in practical training centres and enterprises.

2.2.2.3 *Practical training centres (CKP)*

The creation of a new type of education institution – practical training centres – is the first step towards the systematic restructuring of vocational education. Education policy is based on the assumption that regional concentration of key investments in the field of education will be conducive to the establishment of practical training centres with high technical, technological and education standards. These centres will support vocational schools and other education institutions through ensuring high-profile practical instruction. Practical training centres are multi-function establishments, designed for both young people and adults, and will also provide specialised upgrading courses for teachers. Their main task is to organise and carry out practical instruction for pupils and students of all types of vocational schools.

49 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

50 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

51 Regulation of the Minister for Finance of 9.05.1991 on Self-financing Enterprises of State Agencies, Dz.U. 1991, Nr. 42, item 185.

52 See: *Ministry of National Education on Vocational Education*, op. cit

Practical training centres are authorised to carry out vocational examinations for students in school-based and other forms of vocational education. They also offer retraining and upgrading courses for the unemployed and for workers.

The mainstream activities of practical training centres are financed by the state budget. They also have other sources of income, such as fees for paid training courses and subsidies from local authorities, sponsors and employers. Enterprises, however, are quite reluctant to co-operate with these centres[53].

Practical training centres are usually established on the basis of school workshops of a relatively high standard and are given extra resources when these are available. The establishment of 15 centres in the 1996/97 school year was strongly supported by the central authorities through targeted subsidies, investments in modern equipment and access to know-how under foreign assistance programmes. In the 1997/98 school year, 21 more centres were put into operation. Their establishment, however, was financed by regional and local authorities. The network of 36 centres that have been established so far provide training in mechanics, electronics, electricity, construction and hotel and catering. In the 1997/98 school year. these centres trained about 29,000 pupils and students from vocational schools[54], which shows that their range of operation has been rather limited so far. In the same period, a dozen or so practical training centres, specialising in animal production, plant production, dairy production, food processing, small-scale entrepreneurship, marketing and agri-tourism, have been set up by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Several dozen new centres are to be established at regional level to form a national network. However, it has not yet been decided where the financing for these will come from.

2.2.3 *Management and division of competence*

The new administrative system came into force on 1 January, 1999 and introduced the following changes in the field of education management:

- public primary schools and g*ymnasia* are now run by the local authorities at *gmina* level, while other schools, including vocational schools, are run by the local authorities at *powiat* level;
- the education supervision of education institutions is carried out by the state administration at central and voivodship levels;
- the role of advisory bodies and education boards at *gmina, powiat* and *voivodship* levels will be enhanced; and
- schools and education institutions have been given economic and organisational autonomy.

1999 was a particularly difficult year for the *gmina* because of the restructuring of education, the reorganisation of primary schools, the establishment of gymnasia and the selection of principals and teachers for newly established schools[55].

2.2.4 *Transparency, equivalency and permeability of vocational education*

The diagram of the education system, which is included in Annex 1, and the description of the different types of vocational schools given above show that the structure of vocational education is clear and transparent, that it is differentiated horizontally and vertically and that it is permeable.

53 The problems of practical education centres are dealt with in more detail in "Szkoła zawodowa", 1999, No 4.

54 See: *Ministry of National Education on Vocational Education*, op. cit.

55 Problems relating to management and the division of competence will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Vertical permeability is particularly valuable as it guarantees the continuation of education after the completion of each level. All secondary schools – general and vocational – finish with the *Matura* exam, which opens the way to higher education. Basic vocational schools are the weakest element in the system because their vertical permeability is very low.

Post-primary schools are characterised by weak horizontal permeability and there are no intermediary elements, such as upgrading courses, to facilitate transfer from one school to another. Secondary schools, from the formal point of view, have the same status. However, vocational secondary schools have two functions and, therefore, the range of general education in these schools is much narrower than in general schools. Entrance examinations to higher education institutions are based on general school programmes. The chances, therefore, of graduates of vocational schools passing these examinations are much lower.

Graduates of primary schools usually continue their education in post-primary schools. In the last ten years, the proportion of primary school-leavers that do not go on to further education has declined. In the 1990/91 school year, 93.9% of primary school-leavers continued their education. By the 1997/98 school year, this proportion had risen to 96.6%[56]. Young people, who do not finish their education in school or choose not to continue in a school-based system, can resume their education at any time in the adult education component of the outside-school education system. Twenty-nine per cent of young people, who continue with school-based education, choose a basic vocational school, 33% choose a secondary vocational school and 35%, a general secondary school[57].

Ten per cent of basic vocational school graduates continue their education in a secondary school and the rest enter the labour market. Twenty-eight per cent of vocational secondary school graduates continue their education in higher education institutions, but the majority enters the labour market. As for graduates of secondary comprehensive schools, 69% continue their education in higher education institutions, 31% go to post-lyceum schools and 12% enter the labour market.

The efforts to modernise the education system that were undertaken in the 1990s resulted in increased access to secondary and higher education. Equality of opportunity is one of the principal priorities of the reform. A significant improvement in equal access and in the permeability of secondary education may be expected when the reform takes effect.

2.2.5 *Accessibility of vocational education and training: equality of opportunities*

Current Polish legislation guarantees equal rights of access to education at all levels to all citizens. It is the obligation of the public authorities to ensure that this right is respected[58].

The education system provides opportunities for young persons to acquire comprehensive and vocational education. It also makes it possible for adults to acquire, upgrade or change their vocational qualifications and/or general education[59]. Within the Polish education system, there is a wide, national network of vocational schools and this allows public access to vocational education and the acquisition of vocational qualifications. This access is facilitated by a wide network of dormitories in vocational school complexes. There are 1,079 dormitories located in rural and little urbanised areas, towns and cities[60]. The network of basic and secondary vocational schools covers

56 Data for 1998-99, *"Education in the 1998-99 school-year"*, op. cit.

57 Data for 1998-99, Small Statistical Annual 1999, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

58 Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Dz.U. 1997, nr 78, item. 483.

59 The Education System Act of 7 September 1991, Dz. U. 1991, nr 95, item.425.

60 Statistical data for the 1997/1998 academic year, Statistical Annual 1998, op. cit.

the entire country but, in terms of accessibility, it is not evenly spread. This problem is particularly apparent at the *gmina* level and is due to the process of decentralisation and the extension of the competence of local authorities. In many regions, the post-primary school network does not correspond with current needs.

There are post-lyceum schools in all voivodeships but the distribution of these schools is unbalanced, i.e., there is a concentration of schools in industrial areas and big cities and an insufficient number in rural and non-urbanised regions[61]. The latter areas also suffer from a significant shortage of continuing education structures[62]. Pursuant to government policy, particularly regional education policy, some measures to optimise and develop the network of vocational and continuing education institutions have been undertaken. A network of Centres for Continuing Education (CKU) has been developed and efforts have been taken to develop distance learning and non-public education institutions. Post-secondary vocational education programmes have also been launched within the structures of the Centres for Continuing Education.

Economic, social, cultural and territorial conditions, as well as the schools' selection mechanisms, are conducive to the consolidation of unequal opportunities in education[63]. Those who are most affected are young people from rural areas, who usually complete only basic vocational education and have little chance of continuing their education so as to acquire a better labour market position.

According to the law, men and women have equal opportunities in education and vocational training. Women usually reach higher levels of education than men. They make up only 37% of those completing basic vocational schools, but around half of graduates of secondary vocational and technical schools. Women are the dominant group among graduates of general secondary schools (69%) and post-lyceum schools (73.2%) and the majority of higher education institution students (56.6%)[64] are female.

In spite of this, women's chances in the labour market are worse because of some complex socio-cultural reasons. According to analytical research[65], women occupy managerial positions much more seldom than men and only one third of the members of parliament, higher administration officials and managers are women. This disproportion can also be found in those branches of the economy, which are highly woman-dominated. The number of woman employers is very low; only 2.7% of all working women are in this category. The unemployment rate for women has been higher than the rate for men over the whole transition period.

As far as the education of disabled persons is concerned, in addition to forms of integration in kindergartens and primary schools, special education facilities are available at all levels, from kindergarten to post-lyceum schools. There are also full-time care institutions. At the moment, there are 350 special schools all over Poland[66]. However, vocational education for the disabled is still a long way from meeting the real needs of these people and the accepted international standards laid

61 ibidem.

62 J. Gęsicki, *Contemporary challenges facing adult education*, "Edukacja Dorosłych" 1995, nr 4-5.

63 Kwieciński, Z., *The dynamics of school operations*, Toruń 1995; Szymański, M., *Education disparities in the new social reality*, in Kwiatkowska, H., Kwieciński Z., (eds.), Demokracja a oświata, kształcenie i wychowanie, Toruń 1996.

64 Graduates from the 1996/7 academic year, Students from the 1997/8 academic year, in: Statistical Annual 1998, op.cit; *Higher education institutions and their financing* in *1997*, op. cit.

65 Kowalska, A., *The economic activity of women and their position on the labour market*, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1996

66 Statistical data from the 1997/8 academic year: Statistical Annual *1998*, op. cit.

down in the United Nations resolution[67]. There are still very few disabled students in mainstream vocational schools and the structures for integrating the disabled into vocational education are underdeveloped. The structures of special vocational education, in terms of levels and profiles, do not meet the needs of the disabled. There are only 23 special secondary vocational schools and seven special post-lyceum schools, while special basic vocational schools still provide training in out-dated occupations, which are not in demand in the labour market[68]. This situation will be improved only if it is properly addressed by government and regional policies, in close co-operation with various partners[69].

The Education System Act of 1991 provides grounds for rapid developments in the teaching of national and ethnic minority languages. In the school year 1997/98, there were 419 primary schools with classes in minority languages, including German (265), Ukrainian (80), Belarus (38), Slovak (15), Lithuanian (13) and Kaszub (4). In addition to this, there are 12 secondary schools with classes in minority languages. The total number of pupils and students in these schools in 1997/98 was 33,957[70].

2.2.6 *Changes in vocational schooling: quantitative analysis*

The dominant role in the vocational education and training system inherited from the previous, centrally planned system was played by basic vocational schools, in which 45.9% of primary school-leavers continued their education in 1989. This type of school trained and, to a significant extent, still trains workers in narrow, specialised occupations. However, the percentage of primary school-leavers taking up education in this type of school dropped to 29% in the 1997/98 school year[71].

In the 1990s, one of the priorities in Polish education policy was to popularise secondary education and to increase the proportion entering higher education by creating favourable conditions for primary school-leavers to continue their education in full secondary schools and then to take up higher studies. The quantitative data in Tables 2.1 – 2.3 show the effect of this policy on the levels of uptake of secondary and higher education.

2.2.6.1 *Increased access to education*

In the 1998/99 school year, 7.6 million children, youths and adults, or 19.7% of the total population, were being educated in primary and secondary schools[72].

In the last decade, the effect of demographic factors can be clearly seen in quantitative data on the education system. The decrease in the birth rate has had an impact on the numbers in primary schools, while the baby boom age groups are currently going through secondary and post-secondary schooling. In the 1990/91 school year, primary school pupils accounted for almost three quarters (72%) of the total school population but, in the 1998/99 school year, they accounted for only two thirds (64.8%). Compared to the 1990/91 school year, the number of pupils in primary schools has dropped by 545,000 and this tendency will continue for the next couple of years.

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67 Equalisation of opportunities for the disabled – Standard principles. United Nations Resolution (48/96) of 1 December 1993, " Problemy Rehabilitacji Społecznej i Zawodowej", 1996, no 1.

68 Statistical Annual 1998, op. cit.

69 Piechota, E., *Legal status of the disabled*, Biuro Studiów i Analiz Kancelarii Senatu RP, Warsaw 1992; J. Stochmialek, *Vocational education of the disabled*, "Edukacja Dorosłych" 1996, nr 3.

70 Data from Centrum Obliczeniowe Ministry of National Education.

71 *Education in the1998/99 school-year*, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

72 Ibidem.

As the data in Table 2.2 show, there has been an increase in the rate of participation in second-level schooling in recent years. In general education, the gross level of participation has risen from 18.9% in the 1990/91 school year to 30.1% in the 1998/99 school year and the net level has risen from 18.6% to 29.5%. In the same period, the index of participation in secondary vocational schools, i.e., secondary technical schools and vocational lycea, has gone up from 26.7% to 34.4% gross and from 22.2% to 29.5% net. This process has been accompanied by the fall in the index of participation in basic vocational schools. In the period under consideration, enrolment in these schools dropped from 34.5% to 23.4% gross and from 34.0% to 23.0% net.

There has been quite a significant increase in enrolment in post-lyceum schools. Relatively speaking, participation in these schools has risen from 3.6% to 5.4% gross and from 3.1% to 4.7% net. The important reason for this increase was that most post-lyceum schools stopped requiring a *Matura* certificate as a criterion for admission.

Gross rates of participation in higher education have increased almost threefold, from 12.9% to 33.5%, in the period being analysed and net rates increased two and a half times, from 9.8% to 25.4%[73].

2.2.6.2 *Quantitative changes in the school system*

The results of the education policies of the 1990s, which prioritised the popularisation of secondary education and increasing the number of students in third-level education by extending access to *Matura* and higher-level programmes, can be seen in quantitative data on the number of schools, pupils/students and graduates at each level in the period 1990/91-1998/99. These data are presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.2 Participation in different levels of schooling 1990/91-1998/99

	SCHOOLS					
	Primary[a]	Secondary			Post-lyceum schools	Higher education
		General education	Technical and vocational			
			Total	Basic vocational		
	7-14	15-18			19-24	
	Gross					
1990/91	99.9	18.9	61.2	34.5	3.6	12.9
1991/92	99.6	20.5	60.4	33.1	3.3	
1992/93	99.3	22.3	60.0	31.8	3.0	
1993/94	99.2	23.7	60.1	30.3	3.4	17.6
1994/95	99.0	25.2	60.2	29.0	3.9	19.8
1995/96	99.0	26.3	60.1	27.8	4.6	22.3
1996/97	99.1	27.3	59.3	26.4	5.1	25.4
1997/98	99.7	28.6	58.5	24.9	5.2	29.2
1998/99	99.9	30.1	57.8	23.4	5.4	33.5

73 Higher education institutions and their financing. *Information and statistical overviews*, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

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	SCHOOLS					
	Primary[a]	Secondary			Post-lyceum schools	Higher education
		General education	Technical and vocational			
			Total	Basic vocational		
	7-14	15-18			19-24	
	Net					
1990/91	97.5	18.6	56.2	34.0	3.1	9.8
1991/92	97.3	20.2	55.1	32.5	2.9	
1992/93	97.1	21.9	54.7	31.2	2.7	
1993/94	97.2	23.4	54.5	29.7	3.1	14.0
1994/95	97.1	24.8	54.3	28.4	3.5	15.6
1995/96	97.2	25.9	54.2	27.2	4.2	17.2
1996/97	97.4	27.0	53.8	25.9	4.6	19.3
1997/98	98.0	28.1	53.1	24.4	4.6	22.2
1998/99	98.1	29.5	52.5	23.0	4.7	25.4

a) Adult schools excluded

Table 2.3 Numbers of schools, pupils/students and graduates at different levels of education 1990/91-1998/99

School year	SCHOOLS					
	Primary[a]	Secondary			Post-lyceum schools	Higher education
		General education	Technical and vocational			
			Total	Basic vocational		
	7-14	15-18			19-24	
	Schools					
1990/91	20,533	1,100	6,602	2,995	893	112
1991/92	20,446	1,342	6,848	2,949	903	
1992/93	20,247	1,523	7,072	2,896	969	
1993/94	20,182	1,574	7,209	2,748	1,097	
1994/95	20,074	1,638	7,300	2,669	1,225	
1995/96	19,823	1,705	7,455	2,625	1,432	
1996/97	19,537	1,754	7,384	2,573	1,608	213
1997/98	19,299	1,847	7,489	2,508	1,831	246
1998/99	19,096	2,003	7,660	2,435	2,080	266

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School year	SCHOOLS					
	Primary*	Secondary			Post-lyceum schools	Higher education
		General education	Technical and vocational			
			Total	Basic vocational		
	7-14	15-18			19-24	
	Pupils & students (thousands)					
1990/91	5,287.2	445.0	1,451.1	814.5	108.3	403.8
1991/92	5,310.5	499.8	1,477.9	806.2	100.9	
1992/93	5,312.6	555.8	1,502.0	792.8	95.9	
1993/94	5,278.4	602.4	1,534.1	769.5	110.8	
1994/95	5,195.6	648.6	1,557.8	745.8	131.5	
1995/96	5,104.2	683.0	1,568.3	721.9	161.0	
1996/97	5,012.9	714.4	1,559.8	691.3	182.7	927.5
1997/98	4,896.7	757.7	1,559.9	661.1	190.8	1,091.8
1998/99	4,741.5	809.8	1,565.5	630.7	202.8	1,274.0
	Graduates (thousands)					
1990/91	616.4	92.5	351.0	238.1	41.9	56.1
1991/92	612.3	99.7	368.7	248.4	46.5	
1992/93	625.7	110.9	368.3	241.1	41.1	
1993/94	638.9	122.7	373.7	235.1	40.1	
1994/95	639.9	141.2	386.5	229.3	45.8	
1995/96	627.7	141.2	386.1	215.6	59.2	
1996/97	651.2	151.7	384.9	211.2	70.5	115.9
1997/98	674.2	166.6	380.2	202.2	77.4	145.8
1998/99		189.3*	435.2*	207.1*	77.4	174.8

* *special schools included*

The number of primary schools has been decreasing and will continue to decrease systematically as the number of children in the relevant age group falls. On the other hand, the number of secondary schools has risen. This is most marked in general education, where the number of schools increased by 82.1% from 1,100 to 2,003. The number of secondary technical schools and vocational lycea has gone up by approximately 45%. As the new policy had foreseen, the number of basic vocational schools dropped by 18.7%.

There has been a rapid parallel growth in the number of post-lyceum schools. These increased from 893 in the 1990/91 school year to 2,080 in the 1998/1999 school year, which is an increase of 133%.

A similar quantitative explosion can be observed in the case of higher education. The number of higher education institutions has risen from 112 in 1990 to 266 in 1998. Much of this intensive growth is due to the development of non-state-run higher education institutions, which numbered 158 by 1998. Since 1998, state-run higher vocational schools have also been set up. At present, there are 15 registered schools of this type.

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The changes in the school structure are closely related to changes in the distribution of pupils and students. At secondary level, the biggest quantitative changes took place in general education pupils. The share of young people in general lycea increased from 6.1% in the 1990/91 school year to 11.0% in the 1998/99 school year. The proportion increased from 8.7% to 12.8% in secondary vocational schools and from 1.5% to 2.8% in post-lyceum schools. The proportion of young people attending basic vocational schools has declined in this period from 11.2% to 8.6%.

The quantitative changes in higher education can be attributed, among other factors, to the abolition of centrally imposed admission limits, the expansion of the number and types of education programmes on offer and increased differentiation in the levels of education available. As was mentioned earlier, three- and four-year master programmes are provided in addition to five-year programmes. In the 1998/99 academic year, of the total number of 1,268,414 students, 536,726, or over 42%, were in various vocational programmes. Students in supplementary master programmes constituted 15% of the remaining 731,778 students. The distribution of students in state- and non-state-run higher education institutions is different. In 1998, 28.2% of students in vocational programmes in higher education institutions were in state-run institutions and 83% were in non-state-run institutions. Similar variations can be seen in different faculties and types of higher education institutions. The most popular are vocational studies in economic and higher pedagogical schools and the least popular are three-year university programmes.

2.2.6.3 *Continuation of education on the secondary level*

During the last eight years, the percentage of pupils continuing their education has been gradually rising (see Table 2.4). In the 1990/91 school year, 93.9% of primary school-leavers continued their education. At the moment, the percentage has reached 96.6. The share of school-leavers continuing their education in basic vocational schools has decreased from 42.7% to 29.0%.

Table 2.4 Primary school-leavers continuing their education[a]

	School year								
	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98
	Number of graduates								
Total	570,212	595,053	601,735	607,411	623,273[b]	625,221[b]	612,813[b]	636,959[b]	661,825[b]
Choice of school of those willing to continue their education in the next year									
Secondary education	537,612	558,831	570,548	581,662	597,535	603,863	593,160	614,970	639,843
General education	130,122	155,331	158,502	169,919	184,067	190,813	192,473	208,773	232,327
Technical and basic vocational	407,490	403,500	412,046	411,743	413,468	413,050	400,687	406,197	407,516
Basic vocational	261,411	254,075	250,869	239,608	234,181	225,654	208,874	202,032	192,126
	%								
Total graduates	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Secondary education	94.3	93.9	94.8	95.8	95.9	96.6	96.8	96.5	96.6
General education	22.8	26.1	26.3	28.0	29.5	30.5	31.4	32.8	35.1
Technical and basic vocational	25.6	25.1	26.8	28.3	28.8	30.0	31.3	32.0	32.5
Basic vocational	45.9	42.7	41.7	39.5	37.6	36.1	34.1	31.7	29.0

a – special schools excluded
b – inclusive of school-leavers from art schools

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The number of young people choosing this education path, which, to all intents and purposes, closes off their chances of applying for higher education, is still too large. On the other hand, the proportion of young people continuing their education in general lycea has been growing constantly. The 1997/98 school year was the first time the percentage of pupils taking up education in general lycea (32.0%) was higher than the percentage continuing in basic vocational schools (31.7%). In the 1998/99 school year, this proportion increased by a further 5 percentage points.

About 28% of secondary vocational school graduates and 69% of general lyceum graduates continue their education in higher education institutions and 12% of post-lyceum school graduates carry on their education in higher education institutions (see Annex 2).

2.3 *Adaptation of vocational education and training to labour market and socio-economic changes*

2.3.1 *General aspects*

The introduction of the market economy in the first half of the 1990s underlined the shortcomings of the education system and its maladjustment to the new social and economic conditions. Among the problems that arose were:

- the low percentage of people with higher education;
- the low standard of continuing education; and
- the high percentage of under-qualified staff, especially in rural areas.

The vocational education system proved to be the weakest part of the education system. The fact that it was backward in terms of structure, curricula and technology resulted in graduates having qualifications that were inadequate for the labour market, particularly against the backdrop of changes in the structure of employment. As a result, the unemployment that ensued was, largely, structural. The modernisation of the education system and of vocational training, with a view to ensuring better adaptation to the new demands of the labour market and new social and economic conditions, became a priority of education policy at the beginning of the 1990s. However, the reforms undertaken were only partial. They led to the modernisation of certain curricula, the spread of new teaching methods and the modernisation of the infrastructure in some schools. They did not, however, bring about significant progress in the adjustment of the education system and vocational training to the new demands and conditions. The changes to the system, which were initiated in 1999, by the reform of the education system, combined with administrative reform, are expected to result in fundamental changes in this sphere. This is also part of the preparations for Poland's membership of the European Union and became one of the objectives of the National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development in 1999.

The main objective of this strategy is to increase employment, measured by the percentage of employed in the 15-64 age group, and, at the same time, to improve qualifications. This is to be achieved through:

- enhanced employability;
- entrepreneurial development;
- improvement of the adaptability of enterprises and their staff to the changing conditions; and
- strengthening of the policy of equal opportunities on the labour market.

The implementation of the strategy requires certain legal regulations to be passed and institutions to be established. Among the requirements are:

- the creation of a system of vocational qualification standards, which would provide a basis for curriculum development and examination requirements;
- the improvement of conditions to develop the pupils' practical skills through the expansion of practical vocational training and improvements in the school infrastructure;
- the introduction of a state examination system to ensure the comparability and recognition of certificates;
- the establishment of procedures for, and accreditation of, education institutions that design curricula, carry out examinations and issue vocational qualification certificates;
- the provision of improved training and retraining for teachers;
- the implementation of a remuneration system for teachers based on their qualifications and achievements; and
- support for the introduction of quality management systems into education institutions.

On the other hand, it is necessary to improve the institutional aspects of providing services for the labour market through:

- the development of a contracting system for the labour offices;
- the provision of training for the staff of labour offices and the establishment of occupational standards for the work they do;
- the introduction of new services in the area of vocational information and guidance; and
- the intensification and development of vocational guidance services.

The National Strategy also emphasises the necessity:

- to provide further training for administrative staff, at both central government and local authority levels;
- to promote the social dialogue;
- to draw up programmes for continuing education to counteract social exclusion; and
- to promote equal opportunities.

2.3.2 *Special aspects*

2.3.2.1 *Monitoring the link between vocational education and training and development in the labour market*

The aim of monitoring the relationship between the system of vocational education and training and developments in the labour market is to provide the education system with information which would enable it to adapt to market demands and, in effect, to lower unemployment among young people. Information obtained from the monitoring process should help to adjust qualifications in terms of both short-term and long-term perspectives, i.e., in terms of both the courses provided and the education programmes offered at school level.

The system for monitoring vocational education and training and its relation to the labour market has not fully crystallised. It should be noted, however, that the elements of this system have been emerging progressively. Thus, as far as the interrelationship between education and the labour market is concerned, 1999 can be seen as a year of *stability* and this stability can be attributed to administrative reform in the country. Since 1 January 1999[74], *voivodship* and regional labour offices have taken the place of the *kuratoria* in co-operating with the *powiat* (county) authorities in charge of secondary schools. One would expect these reforms to have a positive impact on education and labour market relations, as institutions in both fields will be managed and financed by the same self-governing bodies and this should facilitate the establishment and development of such relations. That this expectation is being fulfilled can be seen from recent work on regional development, education planning and market monitoring and from prognostic research initiated by the local authorities.

Elements of the system for monitoring vocational education and training and its relation to the labour market are provided by the National Labour Office (Krajowy Urząd Pracy - KUP) and the National Statistics Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny -GUS) in the form of labour market analyses and research on occupational activity and postgraduate unemployment. Research data do not always allow a complex assessment of the situation to be carried out. For example, studies on occupational activity do not always allow this activity to be assessed in terms of local and regional labour markets. Moreover, labour market statistics are aggregates which are too large to be of assistance to local education authorities when they are trying to determine current and future market requirements. The monitoring of the education system is likely to improve as a result of the work of the Team for the Improvement of Statistical Information on Education, which has been set up by the National Statistics Office. The team is working on education indices and research to provide a basis for international comparisons

A very valuable initiative undertaken by the National Statistics Office is modular research, conducted simultaneously with research into occupational activity. This type of research was carried out in relation to the employment of graduates in 1994 and repeated in 1997[75].

A serious shortcoming is the lack of forecasts of the demand for qualified staff. The few predictions that have been made are, generally, restricted to particular branches or sectors of the economy. The current legal regulations provide for action in this field, but this is not fully taken up as it is not possible to rely on systematic financing from budgetary resources. Since 1998, a labour resource team, working with the support of the Government Centre of Strategic Studies, has been in operation, preparing a methodology for researching the demand for vocational qualifications in response to changing requirements on the labour market on national, regional and local levels. The first preliminary results of the team's work are expected sometime in 1999/2000.

2.3.2.2 *Development of national standards*

An important stage in the process of developing national standards is the standardisation of assessment and examinations. On 1 September 1999, in line with the terms of the Order of the Minister for National Education on Principles for the Assessment, Classification and Promotion of Pupils and for Carrying out Examinations and Tests in Public Schools[76], external assessment was introduced, in addition to in-school assessment, into the education system.

74 This was also in preparation for overall reorganisation, which was due to be implemented in the year 2000.

75 Graduate employment during the period 1989-1994, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1995, Graduate employment during the period 1994-1997, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1998.

76 Dz. Ust. 1999 r., nr 41, item 413.

The introduction of external assessment is a new departure. It is an element that will promote evaluation, improve the quality of education and ensure objectivity in assessment and comparability of education results. By making the acquisition of a vocational qualification contingent on passing an external examination, the external assessment system will make it possible to separate vocational education and training from the examination process and will allow the recognition of qualifications to be based on uniform principles and procedures.

The external assessment system will include:

- in the last grade of six-year primary school, a test of the knowledge and skills acquired, based on standards defined in separate regulations;
- in the third grade of gymnasium, an examination of knowledge and skills in both the humanities and the sciences, based on standards defined in separate regulations;
- the *Matura* examination, as a way of assessing the level of general education of graduates from existing secondary general education schools, from three-year specialised lycea and from two-year supplementary lycea; and
- vocational examinations at the end of vocational or post-lyceum school, which would certify the qualifications acquired.

Tasks related to the standardisation of external examinations are carried out by the Central Examinations Commission and the Territorial Examinations Commissions, appointed by the Minister for National Education on the basis of the Amended Education System Act[77] and relevant orders.

Work on standardising assessment and examinations has been going on for several years and, parallel to the activities of the Ministry of National Education, various supporting projects have been carried out.

Within the Nowa Matura (new *Matura* examination) programme, the previous practice of in-school *Matura* examinations has been gradually transformed into a regionally based external system based on uniform standards[78].

The interdepartmental project, Building up the System of Occupational Qualification Standards in Poland – a Methodology for Creating Occupational Qualification Standards[79], was focused on working out a methodology for building up standards. It included the development of research tools and procedures and, on the basis of an analysis of the work involved, produced examples of occupational qualification standards in two branches of the economy, i.e., in the mechanics branch, for mechanical technicians and in the economic branch, for clerks in financial-accounting units.

For the researchers in the project, an occupational qualification standard means the requirements for a particular level and configuration of qualifications that are accepted by representatives of education, the labour market, the social partners and different sectors of the economy. The determination of the standard involves describing the sets of skills, knowledge and predispositions necessary for carrying out the tasks typical of a particular occupation. The two examples of occupational qualification standards were produced in co-operation with different types of

77 Dz. Ust. z 1998 r., nr117, item. 759.

78 Assumptions of the long-term state education state policy, particularly in higher education, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, 1996; New Matura Programme. *Report from the Plenary Session*, Ministry of National Education, June 1996.

79 Project initiated by the European Training Foundation and carried out by the Polish National Observatory (BKKK-Cooperation Fund) under the supervision of Prof. S. M. Kwiatkowski and Z. Sepkowska, 1998-99.

60 54 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

employers in different types of enterprises in the relevant branches and the relevant economic sectors.

The development of occupational qualification standards, which distinguish between types and levels of qualification, make it possible to create modular curricula for vocational education and training, deliverable through obligatory modules that are used nation-wide, optional modules that are specific to a particular region or enterprise and additional modules relating to future technological development etc.

It is planned to draw up occupational qualification standards for each occupation. These are to provide the foundation for creating curricula for training as well as for examination standards. In vocational education, occupational qualification standards should replace the current, obligatory core curricula but, in the transition period, it is expected that they will be integrated into it.

In the 1999/2000 school year, a plan for a uniform vocational examination should be prepared by the Central Examinations Commission. The examination will be organised on the basis of examination requirement standards for particular occupations. The principles and procedures for confirming vocational qualifications are now being prepared. The Central Examinations Commission is preparing proposals on examination requirement standards for vocational examinations.

The first external vocational examinations will be held for students in vocational schools in 2004 and for students in post-lyceum schools in 2006.

To ensure that external assessment is carried out properly and that the methods of acquiring and confirming vocational qualifications conform to the regulations, an accreditation system for training institutions, institutions designing curricula and institutions examining and confirming vocational qualifications is to be introduced. The Territorial Examinations Commissions will accredit institutions examining and confirming vocational qualifications, on the basis of the principles and procedures defined by the Central Examinations Commission.

The need to create a national system of vocational qualification standards is stressed in education policy[80]. At the moment, however, only some elements of such a system are functioning. These are:

- a vocational classification system for vocational education and training;
- job descriptions (sets of qualifications) that set standards for designing curricula for vocational education;
- centrally developed curricula, which stipulate obligatory content and specify the goals and organisation of the education process;
- a system of supervision of public vocational schools and some elements of supervision of non-public schools and of practical training for young people in enterprises;
- a set of regulations on assessing and promoting pupils; and
- a system of qualification examinations.

Examinations are officially carried out by state commissions but, in fact, are administered internally by the education institutions. Training in crafts is the exception because external examinations are carried out by commissions from the craft chambers.

Some of the elements mentioned above are described in greater detail in the next paragraphs.

80 Assumptions of the long-term state education policy, particularly in higher education, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, 1997.

2.3.2.3 *The classification of occupations and specialisations and occupational clusters in vocational schooling*

The obligatory *"Classification of occupations and specialisations'* in Poland was introduced by the Order of the Minister for Labour and Social Policy of 20 April 1995 on the Classification of Occupations and Specialisations for Labour Market Purposes and the Scope of its Application[81]. The first edition of the *"Classification of occupations and specialisations"*, which is usually referred to by its Polish acronym KZiS, was issued in 1995[82].

The reasons for creating a new classification were:

- the need to define the present occupational structure and to forecast future developments in it;
- the ratification by Poland of Convention No 160 and Recommendations No 170 of the International Labour Office on labour statistics, which imposed the obligation to adapt the Polish classification to the International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO-1988; and
- the need to introduce a computerised labour market service.

The basic method used to draw up the *Classification of occupations and specialisations* was a comparative analysis of the following:

- *International Standard Classification of Occupations*, International Labour Office, Geneva,1987;
- *Classification of occupations and specialisations*, Institute of Labour and Social Affairs, Warsaw, 1983;
- *Classification of occupations and specialisations in vocational education and training*, Warsaw, 1982;
- *Classification of occupations and specialisations in vocational education and training*, Warsaw, 1986;
- the nomenclature of directions and specialisations in higher education;
- sectoral and branch reference points; and
- vocational classifications used in countries with a highly developed market economy.

The main methodological assumption made by the working team was to use the current situation on the Polish labour market as a basis for identifying the occupations that are functioning or will function in the future. The foundation of the basic classification structure was laid by dividing occupations into 10 very large groups, according to the international standard ILO (International Labour Organisation, 1988):

- Group 1 Members of parliament, higher administrative staff and managers;
- Group 2 Specialists;
- Group 3 Technicians and middle-level staff;
- Group 4 Office staff;
- Group 5 Personnel in service and sales;
- Group 6 Farmers, gardeners, foresters and fishermen;

81 Dz. Ust. Nr 48, item. 252.

82 *Classification of occupations and specialisations* consists of 5 volumes:
- Vol. 1 – *Structural configuration* concerns the division of occupations into very large, medium and basic groups.
- Vol. 2 – *Proper classification* presents the occupational structure, including the individual occupations and specialisations, in certain basic groups.
- Vol. 3 – *Description of occupational groups* includes descriptions of occupational groups, which are, in turn, divided into very large, large, medium and basic groups.
- Vol. 4 – *List of occupations and specialisations* contains an alphabetical list of occupations and specialisations.
- Vol. 5 – *Glossary of occupations and specialisations* consists of descriptions of the occupations listed in Volumes 2 and 4.

- Group 7 Industrial workers and craftsmen
- Group 8 Machine and equipment operators and fitters
- Group 9 Non-qualified workers; and
- Group 10 Military forces.

The main criterion for distinguishing very large groups is the level of vocational qualifications, understood as 'sets of skills guaranteeing the execution of occupational tasks' (see *Classification of occupations and specialisations*, p.33). Four levels of qualifications have been identified.

- The first level refers to elementary qualifications required from people with basic vocational education, incomplete basic vocational education or, in practice, only primary education. Group 9, 'Non-qualified workers', corresponds to this level of qualification.
- The second level requires full basic vocational education. This level refers to Group 5, 'Personnel in service and sales', Group 6, 'Farmers, gardeners, foresters and fishermen', Group 7, 'Industrial workers and craftsmen', and Group 8, 'Machine and equipment operators and fitters'.
- The third level requires secondary education. This level refers to Group 3, 'Technicians and middle-level staff', Group 4, 'Office staff' and for some occupations and Group 5, 'Personnel in service and sales'.
- The fourth level is concerned with higher qualifications, requires higher education and corresponds to Group 2, 'Specialists'.

For Group 1, 'Members of parliament, higher administrative staff and managers', the level of qualification is not the only criterion used: the function of creating policy and law is added to that of management as a criterion for inclusion in this group.

In the new classification, a five-stage division of occupations was applied:

1. all occupations were divided into 10 very large groups (one-digit code);
2. each very large group was divided into large groups, of which there are a total of 27 (two-digit code);
3. within each large group, medium groups were distinguished, which results in 110 medium groups (three-digit code);
4. within each medium group, basic groups were identified, which results in 369 elementary groups (five-digit code); and
5. individual occupations and specialisations, of which there are 2,392 in total, were classified into the relevant basic groups (seven-digit code).

The classification of occupations unifies and clarifies the terminology used to describe the occupations and specialisations that exist on the labour market. It is a very important document and makes it possible for the labour market to function efficiently, especially in the field of labour market statistics and vocational orientation and guidance.

The classification of occupations for the vocational education and training system

The classification of occupations for the vocational education and training system, introduced on the strength of the Order of the Ministry of National Education of 12 December 1997[83] as amended on 31 May 1999, comprises 179 occupations for which training is provided in vocational schools of all

83 Dz. Ust. No 4, 1998.

levels. For each occupation, the classification indicates the types of schools where training is provided and the appropriate minister to petition for the designation of new occupations. The structure of the classification of occupations for the vocational education and training system is included in the annex to the order. This is fully consistent with the *Classification of occupations and specialisations* up to the level of the three-digit code, i.e., to the level of medium groups. Differences appear in the more detailed categories. The classification of occupations for the vocational education and training system is based on broad-based occupations, which facilitate adaptation to a particular job or workplace. The previous classifications were more detailed and were supposed to prepare workers for specific jobs[84].

Work on unifying the two classifications is under way. Compatibility between the classification of occupations for the vocational education and training system and the *Classification of occupations and specialisations* is possible since both classifications are based on the same documents:

- International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 1997;
- European Classification of Activities; and
- International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO 88 and ISCO 88/COM.

2.3.2.4 *Revision of curricula and development of new curricula*

The standardisation of curricula is, generally, the responsibility of the Minister for National Education. In the case of vocational education, other relevant ministers and heads of central institutions participate in the standardisation process[85].

On the basis of the Education System Act and, especially, the amendment of 1995, new principles for designing curricula have been introduced. The principles include moving from detailed curricula, developed at central level, towards core curricula which stipulate obligatory contents and skills and which are incorporated into school curricula. This approach allows criteria for school assessment, examination requirements and framework teaching plans for particular types of vocational schools to be developed[86].

Core curricula are developed centrally by the Minister for Education, in co-operation with other, appropriate ministers. The new order on this co-operation allows the work on core curricula to be organised in more than one way. The Minister for National Education can entrust research units or other specialist organisations[87] to design a core curriculum for a particular occupation or education profile. The practice of setting up curriculum commissions has been abandoned and curricula can now be worked out in schools and in the education community[88].

84 The 1986 vocational classification for the vocational education and training system comprised 293 white-collar and 263 blue-collar occupations and specialisations. That system did not work out and, especially in the period of structural change in the economy, became one of the reasons for massive unemployment among graduates of vocational schools.

85 The Education System Act of 7 September 1991 r., amended on 21 July 1995 r. Dz. U. 1996, nr 67, item. 329; Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 5 August 1997, on Ministerial Cooperation in the Area of Vocational Education Dz. U. 1997, nr 100, item. 621.

86 Amendment to the Education System Act, ar. 3, pkt 1.13.

87 Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 5 August 1997, on Ministerial Co-operation in the Area of Vocational Education Dz. U. 1997, nr 100, item 621.

88 Core curricula and other curricula: methodological material for curricula commissions, Institute of Education Research.

Since the 1997/98 school year, a core curriculum for obligatory general subjects has been implemented on a pilot basis in general and vocational schools[89] and has introduced meaningful modernisation into general education.

The range of general education has been extended. The core curriculum includes 22 areas of study. In addition to the usual subjects, new areas such as civics, self-study and lifelong learning have been introduced. The core curriculum sets forth the main tasks to be carried out, the content to be covered and the skills pupils are to acquire in the different subject areas.

Each core curriculum will be supplemented by rules and criteria for grading. These are currently being prepared.

One of the education priorities of the 1990s was the introduction of broad vocational profiles to support the vocational mobility necessary in conditions of rapid changes in the economy and the labour market[90]. To achieve this goal, several measures have been undertaken.

- Narrow-profile education, based on the 1982 classification of occupations, which contains 527 items, has been gradually reduced.
- In the 1990s, the introduction of broad-based occupations started on the basis of the 1986 classification of occupations and amendments to it. The number of occupations was limited to 241[91]. The introduction of curricula based on the 1983 classification was aimed at updating the content of education programmes[92]. In industrial branch occupations, the fields involved included microelectronics, informatics, automation, robotics, economics and environmental sciences. The modernisation of the content of education and training for occupations in the commercial sector was aimed at facilitating adaptation to the requirements of the market economy.
- In 1993, the Minister for National Education announced a new classification of occupations, which was based on the concept of broad-based education, for vocational schools. There are 138 occupations, excluding specialisations and including 52 blue-collar occupations and 86 middle-level technical occupations, in this classification. In 1997, the classification was enlarged to include 157 occupations[93]. According to the most recent order of the Minister for National Education[94], the current classification covers 179 occupations.

Occupational profiles are standardised in the form of job descriptions, or sets of qualifications, by branch ministries and other central institutions. As a result of the 1995 amendment to the Education Act, trade unions, autonomous business councils and other economic organisations can co-operate with the appropriate ministers in this process.

89 Regulation No 8 of the Ministry of National Education of 15 May 1997 on Core Curricula for Obligatory General Subjects, Dz. Urz. Ministry of National Education, No 5, item 23.

90 Major trends in the improvement of the education system in Poland, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, June 1994; Assumptions of the long-term policy on continuing vocational education, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, January 1997.

91 The Minister's Announcement of 15 July 1996 on the list of curricula approved for use in public basic and secondary vocational schools, Dz. U. MEN 1996, nr 6, item 34.

92 Symela, K. and Bednarczyk, M., *Experience in the preparation and implementation of the new curricula documentation*, 'Pedagogika Pracy' 1992, nr 20/2, Radom.

93 Order of the Minister for National Education of 18 December 1998 on the Classification of Occupations in Vocational Schools, Dz. U. 1997, nr 4, item 9.

94 Dz. U. 1999 r , nr 4 , item 9.

The implementation of new curricula for 29 occupations from the 1993 classification started in vocational schools in the 1997/98 school year. This task was undertaken by schools which met certain requirements[95].

An important change was initiated by the UPET and IMPROVE programmes (Phare), which introduced a methodology for creating modular curricula. Within these programmes, modular curricula for 29 occupations from the 1993 classification were implemented in branches which were defined as priorities by the Ministry of National Education: economics and trade; electronics; electrical technologies; telecommunication; mechanics; construction; chemistry; and textiles. These curricula were implemented on a pilot basis in 43 vocational schools.

On the basis of this experience, a package of modular curricula for 40 occupations and specialisations at the post-lyceum level (after the technical lyceum) was prepared[96].

The development of curricula in the area of economics was supported by a joint Polish-German project, which prepared curricula for two new subjects, "Basic Economics", to be taught in commercial secondary schools and "An Introduction to the Market Economy", to be taught in non-commercial secondary vocational schools.

The detailed curricula accepted for use in public basic and secondary schools in the 1999/2000 school year include core curricula based on the 1997, as well as the 1982 and 1986, classifications.

2.3.2.5 *Assessment and certification*

The current system of assessment and certification used throughout the training system does not ensure either the comparability of pupils' training achievements or quality control of the performance of teachers and schools. The factors that have led to this situation are described below.

- There is a lack of centrally set standards defining required skills and knowledge.
- There are no unified, nation-wide criteria, which are applicable to all schools, either for grading or for determining training level requirements[97]. The instructions of the Ministry of National Education on this issue[98] provide only a very general description of the principles to be used to grade pupils' achievements and do not specify concrete criteria. In consequence, a pupil's training achievements are indicated by the grade s/he is assigned by the school. These grades are on a six-level scale and do not include a description of the level and scope of the skills and knowledge acquired. The grades, which have a normative character, are assigned by the relevant teachers on the basis of general criteria governing school grades, which are identical for vocational and general education subjects.
- There is no external system to verify examinations at all education levels. Examinations are prepared and graded only on an intra-school basis. This is also the case for vocational subjects. A pupil who has obtained a positive final grade in all subjects on the curriculum for a given occupation may be allowed to sit a vocational studies examination in schools specialising in blue-collar vocational training or a vocational preparedness examination in schools specialising in non-blue-collar vocational education. The examination is designed to establish the level of pupils' vocational skills in relation to the qualification requirements, or description of the occupation, for

95 Circular Letter of the Ministry of National Education to 'kurators' (DKZ i U3-4016-61/97/PM) of 21 May 1997.

96 Circular Letter of the Ministry of National Education to 'kurators' (DKZ i U3-451-4/97/EK) of 20 May 1997.

97 Marquand, Judith, *Feasibility study for a National Assessment System for Polish Secondary Education* , Report to the Ministry of National Education, December 1993.

98 Order of the Minister for National Education of 24 September1992 on the Principles of Assessment and Promotion of Pupils and Young People in Public Schools Dz. Urz. Ministry of National Education 1992, nr 7, item 12

a given occupation or specialisation. These two kinds of examination are the most important element in the employment qualification system. The fact that examination questions are prepared and answered in individual schools and that pupils' knowledge and skills are assessed by their own teachers means that there is considerable variation in the qualification requirements. On graduating, pupils receive a certificate or a diploma declaring that they have acquired either a basic vocational education, at the level of a qualified worker or of a worker with equivalent qualifications, or an intermediate vocational education.

- There is no system for accrediting previously acquired knowledge and vocational qualifications. When they finish their studies in one class, pupils receive a certificate of promotion but this is not a document confirming the acquisition of a qualification and it is, therefore, not recognised by employers. Neither does it enable pupils to have their knowledge and skills taken into account when they take up studies in another occupation. This means that they have no possibility of having the skills and knowledge they have acquired accredited without taking an additional, or accreditation, examination.
- There is no system to accredit grading[99]. In the existing system, grades are assigned by the same teachers who prepare the examinations.

Work on assessment and examination standardisation undertaken by the Ministry of National Education in 1993 was focused, mostly, on changing the format of the *Matura* examination. In the *Nowa Matura* programme, which has already been mentioned, some elements to ensure external standardisation have been introduced and these will be fully implemented in the year 2002. There have also been some pilot trials to unify the format of admission examinations to secondary schools.

2.3.2.6 *Development of vocational orientation and career guidance*

The present system of vocational guidance consists of two subsystems.

The first subsystem is **vocational orientation and guidance for young people**, which is supervised by the Ministry of National Education. There are 596 institutions of vocational orientation and guidance in the country. These are designed to identify the different predispositions of primary and secondary school pupils in order to help young people to choose a job. They also support schools in the field of methodology and in the preparation of materials to inform pupils about types of occupations and schools. There are 976 people employed in institutions of vocational orientation and guidance for young people. These include 531 psychologists and 399 pedagogues. The remaining 46 persons represent different professions.

In the 1997/98 school year, the institutions of vocational orientation and guidance for young people organised training sessions for 245,707 primary school pupils and 30,954 secondary school pupils[100]. Especially important is the fact that specialist help was provided to 40,173 pupils with various disorders and health problems.

The vocational orientation and guidance service for young people has a limited range of influence and does not cover all the young people requiring help. The main weaknesses of this subsystem are the insufficient number of staff and the lack of teacher-vocational counsellors in the primary school structure.

99 Hiszpańska B., *The New Matura Programme as part of the reform of education in Poland*. Conference material, March 1995 (unpublished).

100 Trzeciak, W. and Drogosz-Zabłocka, E., *Model of integrated vocational guidance in Poland*, BKKK, Warsaw, 1999, p. 59.

The second subsystem provides **vocational guidance for adults who are unemployed and seeking jobs**. This service is provided at labour offices and is co-ordinated by the National Labour Office, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The staff employed by the vocational information and guidance service at labour offices consists of 582 counsellors, of which 49 are regional co-ordinators, 461 are counsellors at local labour offices and 72 are counsellors in the Centres for Vocational Information in regional labour offices[101].

The vocational counsellors are, mostly, pedagogues (213), psychologists (100), sociologists (98) and people with other social science qualifications (11). The remaining 160 counsellors have other forms of higher education. In 1998, vocational counsellors provided specialist help to 432,829 people.

The activities of the counsellors include providing information and vocational advice on employment possibilities, training and the upgrading of qualifications. They also offer individual consultation on client strengths and weaknesses and organise group training. Vocational counsellors play a special role in providing help to the long-term unemployed, using appropriate methods, such as motivation training, and acting as resources for the provision of information about occupations and the labour market. The gradual improvement of the quality of the counsellors' work, which can be attributed to the modernisation of vocational guidance practice and continuous professional development of this vocational group, can be considered a particularly positive achievement. Using a World Bank loan, descriptions of 546 occupational characteristics, 200 information files on different occupations, leaflets on 200 occupations and videocassettes were produced and distributed to the counsellors. The computer software, 'Counsellor 2000', was also prepared and distributed. The software is now used by clients in 538 labour offices. In 1999, American interest and aptitude tests were adapted to Polish culture in order to enrich the work tools at the counsellors' disposal.

Another contribution to the expansion of the vocational guidance services provided at the labour offices was the establishment of a network of 12 Centres for Vocational Information in 1997 and an additional 38 Centres in 1999.

The two subsystems function independently and use different guidance practices but they do not fully cover all people requiring help. This is why it is so essential to ensure common access to vocational guidance for young people, given the high unemployment rate in this category. In order to eliminate dispersal and duplication of effort in this field, it is essential that the guidance services provided in the education system and by the labour offices be integrated as a matter of urgency.

2.3.2.7 *Teacher and trainer training*

Officially and legally, teachers are a homogeneous vocational group. All pedagogical employees in every education institution have the status of teacher and their qualifications, professional practice, compensation rules and social entitlements are regulated by a law called the Teachers' Charter.

Teachers in general and vocational schools are educated, mostly, in institutions of higher education. This group includes:

- teachers of general subjects, who are educated in universities, higher pedagogical schools and, in particular subjects, art, sport and technical higher education institutions; and
- teachers of vocational subjects, who are educated in specialised higher education institutions, e.g., agricultural, technical, economic, medical and art colleges.

101 Vocational guidance in labour offices system in 1998, Report, National Labour Office, Warsaw, March 1999, page 6.

In higher education institutions, the education of teachers takes place within the following programmes:

- five-year master studies;
- four-year professional studies;
- three-year licentiate studies;
- two-year supplementary master studies; and
- post-diploma studies for teachers with master degrees.

Three-year teacher training colleges and colleges for foreign language teachers, which have been functioning in the education system since 1990, are another form of teacher education.

In most higher education institutions, teachers' education within five-year master programmes has an academic character. The principle of one-subject education still dominates though, in some higher education institutions, two-subject education has been introduced[102]. Three-year licentiate programmes are often a copy, with slight modifications, of the first three years of standard master programmes. This type of education usually concentrates on theoretical knowledge and on preparing students for further studies. Foreign language colleges are slightly different in that they tend to introduce some practical aspects of teaching.

Colleges within the education system meet the requirements of the labour market better as teaching practice is an integral part of their programmes. Adapting curricula and the organisation of training to changing needs is much easier in colleges than in higher education institutions. The Minister for National Education determines the principles for supervising, creating, transforming and closing teacher-training colleges and approves their framework plans and curricula.

The Minister for National Education and other ministers supervising schools determine what teachers' qualifications should be. A teacher's qualifications must consist of two elements: subject preparation and pedagogical preparation. The required level of education depends on the type of school or institution where the teacher is engaged. The title of Master of Arts or Master of Science enables one to occupy a teacher's post at all schools and education establishments. A teacher who has relevant qualifications and has received a positive work evaluation after two years becomes tenured and gets a permanent contract.

People without the necessary qualifications are still being employed in the education system. This is the result of human resource shortages in the teaching profession, the school structure and the teacher education system. Despite the fact that the qualification requirements are determined centrally, the relative autonomy of higher education institutions means that the minister's influence on the content and implementation of teacher training programmes is limited. Higher education institutions decide themselves on the number and type of teachers they educate and on the content of their curricula. These decisions are, first and foremost, a reflection of the internal policy of the higher education institution, rather than of the needs of the education system.

The Minister for National Education and other ministers supervising schools are responsible for the professional development of teachers[103]. The organisation of continuing training for teachers, at regional level, is the responsibility of the education "*kurators*". The anticipation and analysis of needs in this field is the responsibility of the Regional Methodology Centres (WOM) and, at national

102 *The development of education in Poland*, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, 1996.

103 Order of the Minister for National Education of 10 August 1992 on Institutions for the Professional Development of Teachers, Dz. U. 1992, nr 63, item 317.

level, the In-service Teacher Training Centre (CODN), a unit, financed from the central budget under the control of the Ministry of Education.

The "*kurators*" have, at their disposal, some funds for subsidising retraining and continuing training in extramural and post-diploma programmes. The retraining of teachers on the basis of regional needs is treated as a priority. Acquiring teachers' qualifications through courses organised by teacher development institutions is a temporary solution, which cannot, in the long term, replace the acquisition of qualifications in higher education institutions and colleges.

Some ministries which run vocational schools also have branch centres for training and human resource development, whose duties include the provision of in-service training for vocational school teachers. This applies to schools run by the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, Transport, Health and Labour.

An important role in teacher development is played by higher education institutions. These make it possible for teachers to upgrade their qualifications through supplementary master and post-diploma programmes, which are also offered as extramural or weekend programmes. Higher education institutions are extending their provision of training for professionally active teachers but the training on offer still does not meet all the needs of the education system.

The Polish system of teacher education was one of the most controversial issues in the assessment of the education system carried out by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development experts in 1994-95. The assessment was quite critical of the underlying concept of teacher training as well as of the lecturing method used in teacher training programmes. The experts also stressed that the universities seriously undervalued pedagogical studies and suggested an increase in salaries for teachers and school principals.

Among the numerous suggestions put forward for the improvement of the education and professional development of teachers, the following are the most important:

- introducing two-subject education for primary school teachers;
- setting minimum curricular requirements for master and vocational studies for teachers;
- setting minimum requirements for pedagogical training and for teaching practice; and
- widening the number and types of in-service training options available.

3. Human resources development

3.1 *Continuing training*

3.1.1 *Introduction*

Continuing vocational training is the part of the education system that is the most difficult to describe. This is because the notion of "continuing vocational training", itself, is rather ambiguous. It refers to a great variety of education forms and a wide range of participants and this makes the picture even less clear. In Poland, continuing vocational training covers both in-school and out-of-school education as well as initial vocational education for adults. The different forms of continuing vocational training are financed from public funds or are financed or co-financed by employees and/or employers. This report will, therefore, cover a much broader area than that covered by the Eurostat[104] research in European Union Member States. Statistical data on continuing vocational training are available from training organisers and usually do not contain information on the source of financing. This information can only be obtained indirectly through deduction. For example, courses organised for a labour office will certainly be financed by that office and courses organised for employers or for individual persons will, in most cases, be financed by those for whom they have been organised.

In describing continuing vocational training in the 1998/1999 school year, two important reservations must be made. First, the administrative reform of the state came into effect on 1 January 1999 and this had an influence on the functioning and financing of the education system. Second, on 1 September 1999, the education reform entered into force. Since information on the operation of the reformed system is not yet available, this report will cover the previous education system and the administrative structure that was in force up to 31 December 1998.

The most general approach to the classification of continuing vocational training is to break it down into in-school and out-of-school adult education institutions.

In-school education and training for adults is provided in the same types of school as those in the education system for young people and in some schools which are specific to adult education, such as elementary vocational schools, within the system of primary adult education, and secondary vocational schools, within the system of vocational adult education. These schools can be run by individuals or corporate bodies and they can be public, i.e., state-owned, or non-public, i.e., private.

Out-of-school continuing education can take the form of courses, seminars, specialised work placements, practical training, supervised self-study, training in workshops and post-diploma vocational courses for graduates of master studies and, in some cases, for graduates of higher vocational schools. Courses are the most common form of out-of-school adult education.

104 The research was undertaken in the framework of the action plan for the development of continuing vocational training in the European Union Member States (FORCE) on the basis of the Council Decision of 29 May 1990. Continuing vocational training is seen here as covering activities financed or co-financed by enterprises employing the workers taking part in the training.

The following agencies deal with the organisation of various forms of out-of-school continuing vocational training:

- centres for continuing education;
- practical training centres;
- schools;
- human resources training, retraining and skill-upgrading centres;
- scientific and research institutions;
- enterprises (employers);
- associations;
- foundations;
- companies; and
- other corporate bodies and individuals.

As far as the legal basis is concerned, the education activities of these organisations are regulated by the Education Act or the Economic Activity Act. The former provides that both individuals and corporate bodies may establish schools or non-public education institutions upon registration with the regional "*Kurator*'s" Office. Those registered so far, differ widely in terms of size and of services offered and range from one-person firms to huge companies with dozens of full-time employees and hundreds of teachers in part-time or casual employment.

The Economic Activity Act does not lay down any requirements or conditions on either the location of these organisations or the qualifications of people engaged in education activities within them. Since the Act does not set up any procedures or mechanisms to supervise these education institutions and since no information is available on the qualifications of their personnel, it is extremely difficult to assess the quality of the services they offer.

The Minister for National Education co-ordinates and implements state education policy, including policy on continuing vocational training. The main goals of this policy are outlined in the Education System Act[105], where the tasks, the structure and the forms of continuing training are clearly defined. Detailed rules on upgrading vocational qualifications are set out in an order of the Minister for National Education and the Minister for Labour and Social Policy.[106]

The Ministry of National Education is responsible for drawing up the framework hourly work-plans for public schools and those non-public schools that are officially recognised as part of the school system. The Ministry is also responsible for drafting framework curricula for general education and vocational education and for developing vocational education profiles. It determines the conditions and terms for the official recognition of detailed curricula and handbooks. The education policy outlined by the Ministry of National Education is implemented at regional level by the "*Kurator*'s" Office.

Qualifications acquired outside the school system can be recognised by going through an examination procedure in front of a commission nominated by the "*kurator*". The professional titles of "qualified manual worker" and "master worker" also certify a certain level of occupational skills. Titles such as "apprentice" and "master craftsman" can be obtained by passing an examination

105 Dz.U. 1996, Nr. 67, item 329.

106 Order of the Minister for National Education and of the Minister for Labour and Social Policy of 12.10.1993 on the Rules and Procedures for Upgrading the Vocational Skills and the General Education of Adults, Dz.U. 1993, Nr. 193, item 472.

organised by craft chambers. The legal basis for these procedures is provided in the Order of the Minister for National Education and the Minister for Labour and Social Policy, which was mentioned above[107].

The management and financing of in-school and out-of-school adult education is the responsibility of the founding agencies, i.e., the state administration organs (the "*Kurators'*" Offices), local authorities, corporate bodies or individuals.

The Ministry of National Education assumes that, once the education reforms have been introduced, the continuing vocational training system will no longer have to mirror the school system[108]. The Ministry suggests that, in contrast to the school system for young people, adult comprehensive education should be separated from continuing vocational training. In the reformed system, graduating from a vocational school or a post-lyceum school will entail only a formal recognition of qualifications but not the acquisition of a vocational title. A new system of recognition will be incorporated into the national system for quality control in education. In practice, an adult wishing to acquire the title of "qualified manual worker" will not have to complete his/her education in a vocational school or a vocational lyceum but can simply pass an appropriate state examination.

The Ministry of National Education assumes that such a fundamental change in continuing vocational training will involve breaking down the deep-rooted assumption that school is the only way to acquire an education and that adult education should be school-based. The new law on the continuing vocational training system should make these changes easier and the Ministry of National Education shares the view of some of the non-governmental organisations working on the drafting of this law.

The non-governmental organisations that have initiated work on the draft law are the signatories to the Charter of Adult Education Organisations, which was signed in 1996 by 16 associations and non-governmental organisations, including the Common Knowledge Association (TWP), the Polish Educators' Society (STO) and the Association of Vocational Training Institutes (ZZDZ). The draft aims at determining the rights and obligations of all the actors in the education process and at stimulating employers to look more actively at providing training and education opportunities for their staff.

As laid down in the Act on Employment and to Counteract Unemployment,[109] the Minister for Labour and Social Policy, together with the agencies accountable to him, the National Labour Office and the network of labour offices are responsible for initiating and organising education and training activities related to labour market policy.

3.1.2 *School-based continuing training*

School-based continuing training is mainly post-primary adult education. In the 1998/99 school year, there were 309,200 persons in all primary and post primary adult schools. This is 27% more than in 1990/91. The highest growth, over 50%, was in comprehensive schools. Since 1990, the number of males in school-based adult education has also grown. In secondary adult schools alone, the number grew by 71,000 during the period 1990-1998[110].

107 ibidem.

108 Ministry of National Education on Vocational Education, Bibliteczka Reformy, Volume 3, Warsaw, 1999, p. 10.

109 Dz.U. 1996, Nr.47, item 211.

110 All calculations are based on "Education in the 1998/99 school year", National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

Primary schools are also worthy of mention. These are located, mainly, in towns, where there are 130 schools, rather than in villages, where there are only eight. The number of pupils decreased between 1990 and 1997 and then started to rise (by 570 persons in 1997) and has now reached the level of 9,040 persons. Primary schools also include basic vocational schools for persons with learning difficulties. Sixty-seven per cent of adults in primary education attend these basic vocational schools. Another interesting fact is the high proportion of males (85%) in primary schools for adults.

Adults graduating from primary schools have the following options to continue education at the secondary level:

- comprehensive secondary schools, based on primary education (4 years) or on basic vocational education (3 years), where pupils are grouped in classes or in thematic teams;
- technical secondary schools and vocational lycea of 3 to 5 years duration, depending on the education level reached before, on completion of which students may take a *Matura* examination; and
- secondary vocational colleges (2 or 3 years) that make it possible for students to acquire secondary comprehensive education and to upgrade vocational qualifications and on completion of which they may take a *Matura* examination.

Completion of primary and secondary school is also possible by taking the final examination without having attended classes.

A *Matura* certificate holder is eligible to take entrance examinations to higher education institutions.

Table 3.1 Persons in primary and comprehensive secondary adult schools (in thousands)

	1990/91	1993/94	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Primary schools	13.9	9.9	8.5	8.9	9.0
Comprehensive secondary schools	48.6	64.4	78.8	85.0	97.5

Source: "Education in the 1998/99 school year", National Statistics Office, Warsaw 1999

In the 1998/99 school year, there were 592 comprehensive secondary schools for adults. Of these, 292 are public schools – 217 run by public administrative bodies and 72 by *gminas* – with 67,100 pupils. More than half of all schools of this type, with 31% of pupils, are non-public and 93% of these have public school status.

Pupils of secondary comprehensive schools are mostly young: 54.3% belong to the 18-20 age group.

In the 1998/99 school year, there were 1,735 vocational secondary schools with 202,700 pupils. Of these, 1,007 were run by public administration organs and 300 by *gminas*. Twenty-four per cent of these schools were non-public and 86.9% of these had public school status. One in every five pupils in vocational secondary schools for adults was in a non-public secondary school. As in comprehensive secondary schools, most pupils in vocational secondary schools are young people, i.e., 66.8% are in the 18-20 age bracket.

Most pupils, 119,000, specialise in technical occupations. The second biggest group, 53,000, are those specialising in business and administrative occupations. Next come services with 14,500 and agriculture, forestry and fishing with 14,200.

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Table 3.2 Vocational post-primary schools for adults in the 1998/99 school year by type of school

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of pupils (thousands)
Basic vocational schools	129	11.9
■ Evening	125	11.6
■ Extramural	4	0.3
Vocational secondary schools	930	111.3
After completion of primary school	53	8.1
After completion of basic vocational school	822	98.9
■ Secondary vocational colleges	55	4.3
Extramural vocational secondary schools	676	79.5
■ Vocational secondary schools and vocational lycea after completion of:	543	65.6
– primary school	105	13.0
– basic vocational school	438	52.6
■ Vocational lycea	11	0.9
■ Secondary vocational colleges after completion of:	122	13.0
– primary school	100	0.97
– basic vocational school	22	0.33

Source: Education in the 1998/99 school year, op.cit.

3.1.3 *Out-of-school continuing training*

In the 1998/99 school year, 1,316,000 people participated in out-of-school continuing training. Of these, 1,284,000 were in towns and cities. Compared to the preceding school year, the number of students grew by 87,000 and the number of courses by 8,833.

Forty-eight per cent of all students were in training programmes organised by employers and/or labour offices. The number of these students decreased by 6,000 compared to the preceding school year. The largest number of students in courses organised by employers – 402,500 – were in health and safety at work courses. Foreign language courses and qualification-upgrading courses were also very popular and had 296,700 and 238,800 students respectively.

Table 3.3 Course participants in the 1998/99 school year (in thousands)

Course participants	Total	Women	Unemployed
Total	1,316.1	611.2	102.6
In towns and cities	1,284.5	600.4	101.5

Source: Education in the 1998/99 school year, op. cit.

Of the 17 different categories of course organisers, companies run by individuals and companies set up under civil law were the largest group. These organised 43% of all courses, and had 36% of all students.

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Associations and non-governmental organisations also play an important role as course organisers. They organised 19,000 courses with 31% of all students. Other important categories include limited companies and stock companies, co-operatives, foundations and trade unions.

It is mainly young people who are interested in qualification-upgrading courses.

The results of a poll conducted in 1998[111] showed that 53% of people in the 18-24 age group intended to undergo upgrading courses. Most of these intended to attend courses after their working hours and to cover the cost of their own training. Only 3.5% counted on the employer to organise a course within working hours and to finance it.

Managers are particularly interested in courses: 70% declared their readiness to upgrade their qualifications. It is not important whether the courses are organised within or outside working hours or who pays for them.

Table 3.4 Course organisers in the 1998/99 school year

Course organisers	Number of agencies	Number of courses	Number of participants
Total	2,151	68,209	1,316,118
Including:			
Minister for Labour and Social Policy	1	73	1,125
Central Association of Co-operatives	1	71	1,137
The Association of Polish Crafts	41	535	13,345
Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives	1	15	105
Central Co-operative Union for Residential Construction	1	20	293
The Chief Co-operative Council	26	1,486	25,917
Non-governmental organisations and associations	303	19,619	403,950
International organisations	1	1	17
Political organisations	1	9	48
Trade union organisations	14	525	15,094
Regional organs of state organisations	18	417	12,317
Religious organisations	16	419	7,926
Local authorities	4	99	1,463
Individual enterprises and civil law co-operatives	1,371	29,082	477,021
Stock companies and limited companies	258	13,636	314,830
Foundations	43	1,406	24,662
Individual employers	51	766	16,868

Source: Education in schools year 1998/99, op. cit.

111 Poll of a representative sample organised by Social Research Centre in Sopot, Rzeczpospolita, "Moja kariera", 29.10.1999.

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The Continuing Education Centres (CKU) and the Practical Training Centres (CKP) are important elements in the continuing education system. These, and particularly the Continuing Education Centres, are multi-function public agencies that deal both with initial and adult education. The Continuing Education Centres organise school-based education as well as courses requested by employers and labour offices. They also provide services in the field of vocational information and guidance. The Continuing Education Centres (CKU) and the Practical Training Centres organise examinations for vocational titles. In the framework of the education reform that is currently being implemented, the Ministry of National Education envisages that the Continuing Education Centres (CKU) and the Practical Training Centres will play a special role in continuing adult education.

3.1.4 *Education of teachers*

There is no system to educate, train or upgrade the qualifications of teachers in adult schools. Most of the teachers employed in these schools are part-time workers. The only exception is the comprehensive secondary schools, where more than 50% of the teachers are employed full time. The In-Service Teacher Training Centre does not deal with teachers from schools for adults. An agency that does deal with the education of teachers and other people involved in adult education is the Post-diploma Adult Education College. This was established on the basis of an agreement between the Polish branch of the German Popular Universities Society (IIZ/DVV), Toruń University and the Academic Society for Adult Pedagogy. Students are recruited from among teachers and other activists in adult education employed in Continuing Education Centres, folk universities and teacher training centres. It started operations in 1994, thanks to a subsidy from the Polish branch of the German Popular Universities Society (IIZ/DVV). It has been recognised by the Ministry of National Education.

3.1.5 *Quality standards and certificates*

Within the current system, ensuring the quality of continuing education services is a difficult problem. This is because of the lack of qualification standards, of descriptions of occupations and specialisations and of uniform criteria to evaluate acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications. Another problem is the lack of education standards with regard to methods of education and of ways of evaluating these methods.

Despite these shortcomings, some non-governmental organisations, particularly the Association of Vocational Training Institutes, have undertaken certain steps to ensure high quality in the services offered. Quality system teams have been created and work on certification is ongoing.

In the current adult education system, most attention is paid to the quality of services in school-based education. The Economic Activity Act, which provides for the setting up of private education institutions, assumes that the quality of services will be ensured by market forces. However, the lack of any sanctions whatsoever for poor quality in education services, combined with the fact that anyone can set up an education institution, make the market a very inefficient instrument of quality control.

In the opinion of the representatives of the Association of Vocational Training Institutes (ZZDZ)[112], the state should give up treating continuing education as a purely economic activity and should oblige all education institutions to register at "*Kurators'*" Offices. Since 1 January 1999, education institutions are registered by local authorities at *powiat* level, but not yet by the School

112 Kirejczyk, A., Vocational training in the education system undergoing reform, in: Edukacja ustawiczna dorosłych 1999, No 2.

Superintendents. The Association of Vocational Training Institutes (ZZDZ) representatives say that only registration at School Superintendents' Offices, which involves meeting certain criteria, can ensure the right quality of services since Superintendents are the only state organs authorised to control and supervise the quality of education.

3.1.6 *Forms of continuing training; extramural education*

The continuing education system includes in-school and out-of-school education, training and upgrading courses, which may take the form of day courses, evening courses, weekend courses, extramural or correspondence courses or a combination of two or more of these forms.

The National Centre for Distance Education (OCEN) is the leading agency dealing with distance learning and co-ordinates the activities of a network of open and distance education centres. The creation of the network in 1992 marked a breakthrough in the development of extramural education. Centres of distance education were created within the existing continuing education centres in the region capitals. Centres of open education facilitated access to education aids and to modern technologies which can be used in the education process.

1999 was another important year in the history of the National Centre for Distance Education when its main tasks were modified. Following a decision of the Ministry of National Education[113], the Centre will change its profile and will become a national centre for the education of teachers. Its tasks will now include complementing the services offered by schools, organising courses for school directors as well as carrying out distance education activities in the training and upgrading of teachers. This decision changes the nature of the National Centre for Distance Education and of the entire network of extramural education centres.

3.1.7 *Accessibility of continuing training*

Accessibility of continuing education varies across the country and depends, mainly, on place of residence (urban or rural) and on the financial status of the persons involved. In recent years, male participation in continuing education is much higher than that of females.

Employees who undergo training can benefit from certain rights which are guaranteed by law[114]. They may take up training encouraged by employers or on their own initiative. If the course is organised by the employer, an employee is in a better situation. S/he is entitled to education leave and the employer may offer him/her some other benefits, such as reimbursement for manuals, travel costs and/or tuition fees. If an employee acts on his/her own initiative, his/her situation is less favourable because days off and any other benefits depend entirely on the good will of the employer. The poll quoted above shows that most participants take up training on their own initiative and cover all the costs involved.

Adult men upgrade their qualifications more often than women. The number of men participating in courses in all types of adult schools has grown from 122,189 in 1990 to 190,203 in 1999. Over the same period, the number of women in continuing education has grown only by 16,400. The majority of women attend secondary comprehensive schools, where they constitute 49% of students. The lowest number of women attend primary schools, where they constitute only 18% of pupils.

113 Ministry of National Education on the training and upgrading of teachers, Bibliteczka Reformy, Volume 4, Warsaw, 1999.

114 Regulation of the Minister for National Education and of the Minister for Labour and Social Policy of 12 October 1993 on the Rules and Procedures for Upgrading the Vocational Skills and the General Education of Adults, Dz.U. 1993, Nr. 193, item 472.

There is more access to extramural continuing education in towns and cities than in rural areas. The vast majority (97.6%) of those who take advantage of this form of education live in urban areas. Men constitute 53.6% of participants. Men also dominate the courses leading to the acquisition of certified qualifications (88.4%) and to the acquisition of a vocational title (75%). Women, on the other hand, dominate in foreign language courses, where they constitute 66% of all participants.

The rules and procedures for organising and financing courses for the unemployed and persons likely to become redundant are laid down in the Act on Employment and to Counteract Unemployment (Dz.U.1997, No 25, item 128). The Labour Fund, which is a targeted state fund, managed by the President of the National Labour Office, can finance basic vocational courses, retraining and upgrading courses and courses in active job searching. Labour offices offer courses to the unemployed. Every unemployed person is entitled to participate in a vocational course if s/he has no qualification, wishes to requalify or has lost the ability to work in his/her former occupation.

3.1.8 *Conclusions*

Since the beginning of the transformation process, the education services market has been developing. The services offered respond to the needs of various groups.

Associations and non-governmental organisations play an important role in continuing vocational education and organise a significant proportion of all courses. The rate of participation of employers in the organisation of courses for their staff is still very low.

Access to continuing education varies significantly and depends on a variety of factors. Men, inhabitants of urban areas and those who already have acquired an education constitute the majority of course participants.

Work has started on the creation of qualification standards, which would be an important step towards improving the system for the recognition of qualifications. State examinations, rather than the completion of a course or graduation from school, should be the decisive factor in recognition.

Despite certain achievements, such as the development and diversification of the services offered, particularly out-of-school services, the importance of continuing education is still insufficiently recognised. The legal basis of this form of education is weak. The creation of a continuing education system should have been preceded by the application of a law on continuing education. This view is generally accepted and is shared by both government representatives and non-governmental organisations. A law of this kind should contain provisions on employers' responsibility for the organisation and financing of vocational courses.

The Minister for National Education believes that continuing education should become a coherent and stable element of the whole education system and envisages the introduction of in-depth changes in the system of financing, particularly for school-based forms.

Public schools, which have been free up until now, will be paid for by participants, in the form of tuition fees, while the state will take the responsibility for creating opportunities for loans and credits for adult education.

In the context of the reform of education and of the administrative system of the state, local authorities will be given new responsibilities in the field of continuing education, including responsibility for running all types of adult schools as well as Continuing Education Centres (CKU) and Practical Training Centres (CKP). Ensuring that adequate training is provided for local authority officials and personnel will, thus, become a matter of some urgency.

3.2 Management and administrators training

3.2.1 General information: types of training providers, development trends

The changes that have taken place in management education since the start of the transformation of the economic system in 1989 could be perceived as symbolic of the entire process of transformation. The increasing demand for well-educated managers has opened up market opportunities, which were very quickly taken advantage of by entrepreneurial people who set up schools of business, management training centres etc. These new institutions started to compete with the traditional education system and, undoubtedly, have contributed to the acceleration of the reform of that system. The result is that there is a range of education and training services available.

The education and training service market in the area of management is heterogeneous. There are many organisations, both public and private, with different legal statuses and engaged in different kinds of activity, operating in this sector. Among them are:

- state higher education establishments and their departments;
- non-state tertiary education establishments;
- training centres and schools set up by non-governmental organisations, such as foundations and associations;
- commercial establishments, such as limited liability companies, civil law companies etc.
- co-operatives and chambers of commerce; and
- state institutes and training centres.

A Task Force on Training and Human Resources (BKKK) publication, "The 1998 Guide to Business Schools in Poland", mentions 246 training providers, grouped into three categories:

- higher state schools;
- higher non-state schools; and
- other providers.

The actual number of management training providers is much higher, but up-to-date data on this is not available. Research conducted by the Task Force on Training and Human Resources in 1993 revealed that about 430 such institutions were operating in the country[115].

In this chapter, all providers of management training will be referred to as "business schools".

The dynamics of the development of management training are well illustrated by data on the number of non-state tertiary institutions operating in this area. In 1991, there was only one such school; by 1992, there were 11; and, at the end of 1996, there were almost 80. The number of students, in both state and non-state schools, has grown equally fast. As Table 3.5 indicates, the total number of students in non-state higher education institutions in 1998 was double the total number of students in state schools. Data on the number of students enrolled with other training providers is not available.

115 Chmielecka, E., Management Education in Poland, Warsaw, 1994.

Table 3.5 The number of students in state and non-state higher business schools[116] in 1997 and 1998, by type of study programme

	February 1997		June 1998	
	Number	%	Number	%
No of students in state schools				
Full-time studies	54,473	48.0	62,956	45.4
Part-time and evening studies	51,731	45.5	65,672	47.4
Post-diploma studies	7,366	6.5	9,968	7.2
TOTAL	113,570	100.00	55,964	100.00
No of students in non-state schools				
Full-time studies	22,181	32.6	35,793	27.1
Part-time and evening studies	43,902	64.6	92,554	70.1
Post-diploma studies	1,900	2.8	3,617	2.7
TOTAL	67,983	100.00	131,964	100.00

Source: Minkiewicz, B. and Kozińska, A. (eds.), Changes in management and business education in Poland in the second half of the 1990s, Task Force on Training and Human Resources (BKKK), Warsaw 1999

3.2.2 *Regulatory environment of management education*

3.2.2.1 *The state system*

The operation of higher state and non-state business schools is regulated by the Higher Education Act. State schools are established on the basis of the law, while non-state schools require a licence from the Ministry of National Education. The issue of a licence is contingent on the approval of the Chief Council on Higher Education. The Chief Council determines the conditions that should be satisfied by the school, as well as minimum curriculum requirements for the different study areas. In practice, the law gives schools autonomy, especially as far as training curricula are concerned. There is no state system to assess the quality of training in the higher education sector. However, the Chief Council has commenced work on a policy framework for such a system. The possibility of linking the system of quality assessment with the system of accreditation and establishing a specialised agency, the Academic Accreditation Board, to deal with this is also being considered[117].

Management training delivered outside the higher education system is subject to the general regulations on adult education, laid down in the Education System Act and the 1993 Order of the Minister for National Education and the Minister for Labour and Social Policy on the Rules and Procedures for Upgrading the Vocational Skills and the General Education of Adults, which was referred to at point 3.1.1 above. Permission from the local authority is required to set up a school but, apart from formal acquiescence on the adequacy of a training provider's teaching staff, this does not entail any assessment of the quality of the services offered. Neither is there any monitoring of the

116 Training providers in the area of management and marketing and in related areas were considered.

117 Assumptions of long-term state education policy, Warsaw, 1996.

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activity of registered training providers. In reality, therefore, it is the market that regulates the operation of business schools in this category.

The Task Force on Training and Human Resources and the Centre for the Development of Economic Studies at the Warsaw School of Economics monitor the development of the management education market. The Task Force on Training and Human Resources has also co-ordinated and implemented some foreign assistance programmes supporting the development of this sector.

3.2.2.2 *Other forms of regulation*

The Association of Management Education Forum has tried to set up a voluntary system of quality assessment in management education. The association's principal aim is to raise the quality of education and training through a dialogue between education providers and their clients. So far, the Forum has developed a set of standards for three training programmes – Master of Business Administration, the licentiate and a one-year post-diploma course. It has drawn up rules to govern the Accreditation Board and has established accreditation procedures. Some programmes have undergone accreditation on the request of interested schools. As a result, four Master of Business Administration programmes, two licentiate programmes and three post-diploma management courses have been accredited. As the only national organisation of this type in Central Europe, the Forum has become a member of the EQUAL Association of European Business Schools Accreditation Agencies.

There have been some grass roots initiatives aimed at the introduction of quality assessment systems[118].

A system of internal assessment of training and research quality, consisting of four elements – a student questionnaire, a periodic assessment of teachers' work, a periodic peer review of the school's departments and a tracer study – has been developed in the Warsaw School of Economics.

Most state and non-state business schools have introduced elements of internal assessment.

3.2.3 *Programmes, certification, teaching staff, training methods and infrastructure*

3.2.3.1 *Programmes*

Business schools offer a wide range of programmes. Data on the provision of different programmes by the different types of business schools is presented in Table 3.6. This data was gathered as part of a research project commissioned by the Task Force on Training and Human Resources (BKKK) in 1998[119]. More recent data is not available.

118 Minkiewicz B., and Osterczuk A., *Changes in management and business education in Poland in 1993–1995*, BKKK, Warsaw, 1997.

119 Minkiewicz, B., and Kozińska, A., *Changes in management and business education in Poland in 1993–1995*, op. cit.

Table 3.6 Types of programmes offered by business schools

Type of programme	State higher education institutions	Non-state higher education institutions	Other providers
Licentiate- full time	46.2	91.0	
Licentiate – part time	73.0	91.0	
Licentiate – evenings	25.0	37.4	
MA/MSc – full time	82.7	13.2	
MA/MSc – part time	62.0	16.2	
MA/MSc – evenings	27.0		
Post-diploma courses	44.0	44.0	91.0
MBA	17.3	8.0	43.0
Other forms	44.0	44.0	

3.2.3.2 *Certification*

The majority of state-run higher business schools offer master degrees and licentiate diplomas in management and marketing[120]. In addition, these schools issue diplomas in management, company management, economics and organisation and management[121]. Approximately 27 non-state business schools have the right to issue master-level diplomas.

The Master of Business Administration courses run by business schools, with and without the higher school status, offer training leading to a diploma, which is often issued jointly with a foreign partner. The Master of Business Administration degree is not, however, officially recognised by the Ministry of National Education and, basically, has only a market value. Business schools also offer other programmes that are organised jointly with foreign partners and lead to diplomas which are equivalent to foreign qualifications, such as Master of Science in Business, Maîtrise de Hautes Etudes Commerciales en Science de Gestion Approfondie etc., which, however, are not equivalent to any qualifications recognised in Poland.

Business schools which do not have a higher education institution status usually offer short training courses leading to a certificate confirming the completion of training.

For the time being, there is no full equivalence between programmes offered by the various training providers. The minimum curriculum requirements for master programmes were introduced only in 1996 and there are still no minimum requirements for licentiate studies. Other types of programmes are not subject to any standardisation, apart from the aforementioned initiative undertaken by the Association of Management Education Forum.

120 Higher business schools have the right to issue diplomas relating to the following vocational qualifications: MA, MSc. and Licentiate.

121 www.men.waw.pl

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3.2.3.3 *Teaching staff, training methods and infrastructure*

State higher education institutions are the main supplier of teaching staff for business schools. Research carried out in 1993[122] showed that 82% of the staff employed on a contract basis by non-state schools are holders of full-time positions in state higher education institutions. This is due, partly, to the poor financial standing of the state education system and, hence, the poor pay of the academic teachers who are obliged to take on additional employment and, partly, to an insufficient supply of academic staff. The same applies to business schools without a higher education institution status. Typically, these are established and run by higher state school staff. Increasing the number of teaching staff is, therefore, of vital importance for the future development of management education. On the other hand, although an academic career is still not particularly attractive, young staff are being employed more and more often by third-level institutions. This is a positive sign as, to some extent, it bridges the generation gap that has been evident in recent years. At the same time, however, it lowers the average qualification levels of teaching staff in these institutions[123] and cannot be seen as a lasting solution to the problem. More and more often, it is suggested that doctoral studies be organised with the participation of foreign institutions, which could supply teachers and trainers in management. There is no system for training the teaching staff in schools that do not have a higher education institution status. Because of the way they operate, combining the function of lecturer with that of consultant is particularly desirable for staff in these schools. The Matrik programme, financed by the British Know-How Fund and delivered in the Krakow region, is an example of how this problem is being dealt with on a regional level[124].

Our 1993 research[125] demonstrated that traditional lectures and seminars are the predominant mode of training in business schools. To a lesser extent, case studies, decision making games and computer simulation are also used. Large business schools that cooperate closely with foreign institutions favour active forms of teaching and learning. A gradual improvement in this respect can be seen from an analysis of the questionnaires sent out and collected by the Task Force on Training and Human Resources (BKKK) for the purposes of gathering information for its guide to business schools. This improvement can be attributed, on the one hand, to growing market competition and, on the other, to increased investment, especially by non-state schools, which results in a modernisation of training infrastructure.

3.2.4 *Financing*

The state budget is the main source of financing for state schools, as full-time studies are still free. However, these schools are constantly expanding their activities in the area of paid part-time and evening courses. These have become a substantial source of income, which is of particular importance in the light of the insufficiency of state resources. At the same time, these courses are generally considered to be of lower quality, despite that fact that they lead to the same diplomas as full-time studies.

Non-state schools offer paid training, and trainees' and students' fees are the principal source of finance. Financing from other sources, e.g., sponsorship by business, is marginal.

122 Chmielecka E., *Management Education in Poland*, op. cit.

123 Minkiewicz B.,and Osterczuk A., op. cit.

124 The programme envisages the training of some 100 trainers in management.

125 Chmielecka E., *Management Education in Poland*, op. cit.

3.2.5 *Foreign assistance: co-ordination and role*

The Department for Foreign Assistance and European Union Funds and Programmes of the Committee for European Integration[126] is the chief co-ordinator of foreign assistance, including assistance in the area of management education. The Task Force on Training and Human Resources of the Co-operation Fund, which reports to the Committee, is responsible for carrying out some projects. The TEMPUS programme, which provides significant support to management education, is managed by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education. This Foundation managed the TESSA programme as well.

Foreign assistance has played a vital role in the development of management education in Poland since 1989. In the initial period, i.e., from 1990 to 1992, a good part of this assistance was appropriated for the development of a cadre of managers, who were training directly in foreign training companies, and for financing scholarships and work practice overseas. Later, greater emphasis was put on the institutional development of Polish education establishments. The situation as it exists today is summarised below.

- The rapid increase in the number of business schools and of programmes on offer occurred in connection with bilateral foreign assistance and the TEMPUS and TESSA programmes. This is exemplified by the four regional management centres established with the assistance of the British Know-How Fund and the 24 postgraduate programmes in management and related areas introduced in higher schools and financed by the France-Pologne Foundation. TEMPUS helped establish 12 new training centres.
- Some non-state schools and training centres benefited substantially from the policy decision of some donors, especially those involved in bilateral donor programmes such as the Know-How Fund, to direct their assistance to the non-state sector. Some non-state schools were skilful in taking advantage of the various possibilities offered by assistance programmes. For example, they reallocated the money saved on foreign teaching staff, whose costs were covered by the donors, to development. This type of long-term planning occurred more often in non-state schools; state schools tended to utilise the aid on a more ad hoc basis[127].

Another characteristic of foreign assistance is that they provide a relatively small amount of on-the-job training combined with guidance. Only the German assistance programme has treated this kind of training as a priority.

Other foreign assistance programmes have contained some elements of management training that is not directly related to education e.g., programmes supporting small and medium-sized enterprises or regional development. These, however, have been aimed at supporting the delivery of programme objectives and have not had a direct impact on the management of the education system as such.

3.2.6 *Other issues*

3.2.6.1 *Training recipients*

Management schools run by the state are, of course, dominated by secondary school graduates, both as full-time and part-time students. In other forms of training, higher school diploma holders

126 Formerly the Department for Foreign Assistance in the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for European Integration and Foreign Assistance.

127 Kozek T., Management education in Poland, Interim Report, unpublished, Warsaw, 1997.

following post-diploma courses are in the majority. Table 3.7 presents data on recipients of management education in non-state and other institutions[128].

Table 3.7 Recipients of management education

Employers of an average trainee group	Non-state higher education institutions	Other companies
People outside employment (unemployed, students)	43.4	27.3
State employers	23.3	35.1
Polish-foreign joint ventures	8.0	6.7
Domestic private companies	21.8	23.9
Public administration	3.7	4.6
Non-profit organisations	0.0	1.3
Military	0.0	1.1
Co-operatives	0.0	0.1

Source: Chmielecka E., Management Education in Poland, Warsaw 1994.

Public administration employees are characterised by a low rate of participation while employees in co-operatives participate in training hardly at all.

Research shows that tailor-made courses are most popular with middle-level managers and represent 63% of all courses attended by them. This is somewhat less true of courses attended by senior management and company owners, 50% of which are tailor-made, while only 36% of the courses attended by top management fall into this category.

3.2.6.2 *The role of social partners*

The social partners do not play a significant role in management education. The absence of employers is a serious deficiency. The basic reasons for this situation are described below.

- The social partners are still pursuing their own interests in relation to the transformation of the system and issues of training and education are of secondary importance to them.
- There is no institutionalised dialogue between the management education milieu and employers, or even the business environment in general. The Association of Management Education Forum, which has already been mentioned, was to become a platform for such a dialogue. To date, however, no meaningful achievements in the direction of establishing contacts with the business environment have been noted.

128 Chmielecka E., *Management Education in Poland*, op. cit.

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3.2.6.3 *Management training and companies*

In the initial phase of transformation, there was a marked decrease in company-provided training. This resulted from:

- the deterioration of the human resource development services and their inability to deal with the new economic reality, with the resulting lack, in many companies, of competent staff to deal with human resource development;
- financial restrictions, i.e., the poor financial standing of many companies, which meant that they were unable to allocate resources to training, and the ending of support from state agencies, which companies used to enjoy in the old regime; and
- the reduction in resources for in-house training and the closing down of the state sector training system, which played a vital role in the old regime[129].

These observations refer, primarily, to state-owned companies. Privatised enterprises tend to identify their own training needs more readily and to satisfy them through participating in various privatisation projects, financed by the state, or in foreign assistance programmes. Newly created private companies do not usually consider training as a cost-effective instrument for their personnel policy. They consider it to be more effective to employ new staff, already equipped with the required skills, rather than to become involved in the lengthy and costly process of upgrading the qualifications and skills of their own staff. Companies with foreign capital or branches of western firms in Poland, which bring modern methods and instruments to their human resource development policy, have a different approach.

A report based on research carried out in Polish companies confirms that training for management staff continues to be a low priority[130]. Over half the managers covered by the research admitted that their companies allocate virtually no funds or make only a token contribution to training their managers. This is especially true of private firms and co-operatives. Big state enterprises and privatised companies still have the largest training budgets. These are, however, small compared to those of European Union companies. More than 25% of the managers surveyed had not taken part in any training in the previous two years and 31% had participated in one or two courses.

129 Kozek T., Management education in Poland, op. cit.

130 Szaban J., Polish managers '96, in : Report on management, Conference material, Warsaw, 1996.

4. Research on the labour market, vocational education and training

4.1 *Organisation of research*

Up to 1990, vocational education was supported by an extensive scientific and research structure whose central link was the Institute of Vocational Education (Instytut Kształcenia Zawodowego or IKZ), which maintained a close working relationship with technical, economic and teacher-training higher education institutions and universities. The closure of the Institute of Vocational Education in 1990 greatly limited and dispersed research on vocational education and training. At present, there is a need for a central, co-ordinating institution responsible for studies in this field.

In 1997, research and development work was carried out in 820 facilities in Poland. Of these, 43.7% were development units in industry, 16.5% were science and research institutes and 12.7% were higher education institutions. Among the scientific institutes, only three conduct large-scale research in the area of vocational education and training:

- the Institute for Education Research (IBE-Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych) in Warsaw;
- the Institute for Technological Applications (ITE- Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji) in Radom; and
- the Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (IPiSS- Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych) in Warsaw.

National centres for teacher training also have an input into vocational education and training research. These are:

- the Main In-service Teacher Training Centre (CODN- Centralny Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli); and
- the Methodology Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance (CMPPP- Centrum Metodyczne Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej).

The former conducts research on teacher training for vocational schools, didactic innovation and, since 1999, the quality and standards of teaching. The latter carries out research on vocational orientation and guidance as well as comparative studies on the classification of occupations in school systems.

Scientific institutes and higher education institutions carry out research as part of their statutory activities and of their own research programmes, which are directed, above all, at the continual improvement of the qualifications of their research staff.

Education research is carried out, in the form of research projects, through the Committee for Scientific Research (KBN- Komitet Badań Naukowych) and the Ministry of National Education and, in the form of subsidies for particular research projects, (the "DOT-s") through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. However, there is no central co-ordination or centrally defined priorities.

There is little by way of systematic research and the implementation or dissemination of research results is practically non-existent[131]. There are no mechanisms in place to enable research results to be implemented. Projects implemented as part of assistance programmes are something of an exception in this regard, as these often do come up with concrete solutions to organisational and other problems, which are implemented even while the research is still going on.

Another positive factor is the steady development, in recent years, of a number of research projects commissioned by the Ministry of National Education. This research deals, mainly, with the content and the quality of education programmes and with qualification standards. The research is carried out by teams from the Institute for Education Research (IBE), the Institute for Technological Applications (ITE) and the Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (IPiSS) working in close co-operation.

The topics researched by research institutes and higher education institutions as part of their statutory activities and their own research programmes are determined by the researchers and academic staff employed by these institutions and are then approved by the head of the founding body of the institution in question. For this reason, research topics are very diversified and there are no clearly defined priorities, which is indicative of the lack of an education policy in this field. The research which is carried out tends, therefore, to reflect the interests of the research workers and scientific demand.

The experience of research institutes shows[132] that, because of the limited funds available, the scope and subject matter of draft research plans are often narrowed down and research is carried out within the boundaries of one voivodship or several selected schools. The results of this type of research, although it indicates certain trends in the direction of change, are not comprehensive and can be generalised only with great caution.

4.2 *Research financing*

Since 1991, the central institution providing funds to cover the costs of research has been the Committee for Scientific Research (KBN). This finances the statutory activities of the institutions which conduct research and provides additional, parallel financing through a series of competitions for research projects, organised by the Committee.

The competition system for research projects distinguishes between own research projects, for which grants are awarded, and commissioned research projects, most of which are carried out as a result of an initiative by the state administration.

The Committee for Scientific Research (KBN) is currently evaluating a research project entitled *A functional model of continuing vocational education in the perspective of integration with the European Union* (Model funkcjonowania ustawicznej edukacji zawodowej w perspektywie integracji z Unią Europejską), which was commissioned by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Another project connected with vocational education and training research, which is already in progress (1999-2001), is a commissioned piece of research on *The labour market in view of integration with the European Union* (Rynek pracy wobec integracji z Unią Europejską). These are the first research projects on vocational education and training that the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy have commissioned in

131 Education in the changing society. Ministry of National Education, Warsaw, 1997.

132 Reports on the activities of the Institute for Education Research (IBE) in the period of 1994-1998, IBE, Warsaw.

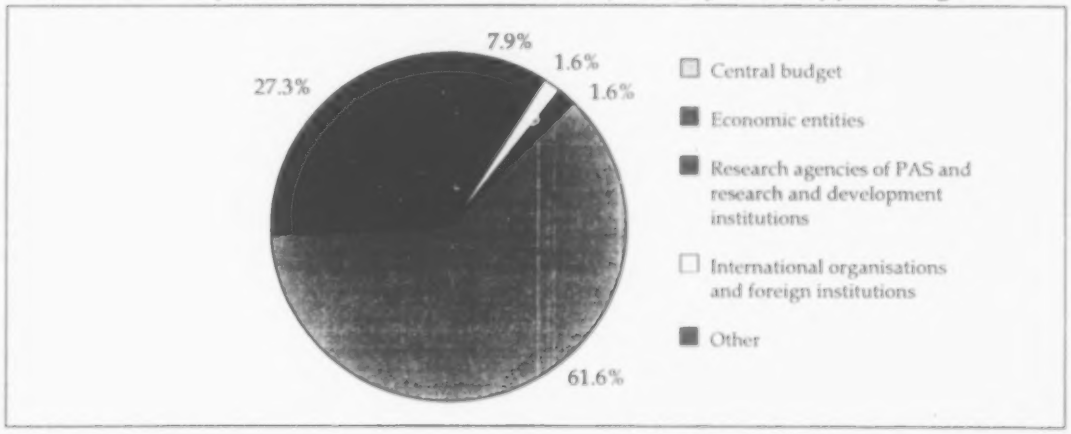
the past few years. By comparison, in 1997, the largest number of projects, 28, was commissioned by the Minister for Economy, while the Minister for Agriculture and Food Economy and the Minister for Health and Social Welfare each commissioned nine projects.

Research and development activities are financed from the following sources[133]:

- state budget resources;
- resources of the scientific institutions of the Polish Academy of Sciences and of research and development bodies;
- resources of higher education institutions;
- resources of individual enterprises;
- resources of private non-profit institutions;
- resources of international organisations and foreign institutions; and
- own resources.

In Poland, allocations to research and development activity from the state budget account for 60% of the total outlay on such activity and significantly exceed those in the European Union Member States. A breakdown of the sources of financing for research and development activities in 1997 is shown in Chart 4.1.

Chart 4.1 Expenditure on research and development by source of financing in 1997



Approximately 74% of the income from research activity in state higher education institutions is in the form of subsidies or special purpose funds. Income from the sale of research accounts for 26.4%.

Precise data on the evaluation of outlay on research on vocational education and training and the labour market is not available. On the basis of the information included in the SYNABA system[134], it can be concluded that most of the funding for research on vocational education and training is in the form of state subsidies or grants.

133 Science and technology, National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

134 The SYNABA system is run by the Data Processing Centre (Osrodek Przetwarzania Informacji – OPI), which is supervised by the Committee for Scientific Research (KBN), and includes reports on scientific and research work, doctoral theses and habilitation dissertations.

4.3 Characterisation of research materials

There is comprehensive documentation available on quantitative changes in vocational education and training as well as on changes in the labour market. This is prepared as part of the statistical research conducted by the National Statistics Office. The data has been published for the past few years in annual publications such as:

- *Higher education institutions and their financing* (Oświata i wychowanie (Education), Szkoły wyższe i ich finansowanie); and
- Education and technology (Nauka i technika).

The main publications of the National Statistics Office on labour market research include quarterly reports, such as:

- *Research into the economic activity of the* population (Badania aktywności ekonomicznej ludności); and
- *Registered unemployment in Poland* (bezrobocia rejestrowane w Polsce),

  which are published in a bilingual Polish and English version; as well as the
- *Labour statistics annual* (Roczniki statystyki pracy).

which is published every two years. Most of the research conducted by higher education institutions deals with education in the fields of agriculture and management and with the resources of the labour market and of higher education institutions. The SYNABA database shows that research carried out in higher education institutions on vocational education and the environment in which it operates is, mostly, research conducted as part of the preparation of doctoral theses or as part of assistance programmes, such as Phare. A great deal of this research is on management and labour resources and is carried out, mainly, in the economic schools.

A considerable part of research on the labour market deals with unemployment and the factors influencing it, as well as on measures to limit its occurrence. Particular attention is given to the situation of young people on the labour market. This kind of research has been carried out by scientific and research institutes, higher education institutions and labour market institutions, i.e., the labour offices. Studies were carried out on, *inter alia*, the attitudes of young people towards salaried work and the employment and unemployment rates of graduates from different levels in 1990-1994 and 1994-1997. The most important reports on the employment status of graduates in these two periods were carried out by the National Statistics Office. They are:

- *The employment of graduates in the period 1989-1994* (Losy zawodowe absolwentów w latach 1989-1994); and
- *The employment of graduates in the period 1994-1997* (Losy zawodowe absolwentów w latach 1994-1997).

Among the research and reports that are unpublished to date, a study on the process of transition from education to the labour market, *The transition from school to the labour market* (Proces przejścia między edukacją a rynkiem pracy), which was carried out at the Centre for Science Policy and Higher Education Research of Warsaw University (Centrum Badań Polityki Naukowej i Szkolnictwa Wyższego Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego), deserves special attention.

4.3.1 Summary

The subject matter of studies on the labour market and vocational education and training is greatly diversified and the research is carried out at a variety of research and development institutes, universities, economic, agricultural and technical higher education institutions, the National Statistics Office, labour offices and non-governmental institutions. Studies of vocational schools, curriculum content and teaching methods are conducted, mainly, by research institutes and teacher training centres. A significant portion of this research is carried out as part of the process of preparing doctoral dissertations. There is a lack of research which looks at both school-based vocational education and continuing education.

There is a need for a central institution to co-ordinate research on vocational education and training. Research priorities have yet to be determined by the Ministry of National Education and current research topics reflect the interests of the project authors and contemporary research trends and demand. Since 1998, the Ministry of National Education has set research priorities in the area of teacher training and this should be considered a step in the right direction.

Vocational education and training research is financed, first of all, by the state budget through funds designated for the statutory activity of research and higher education institutions, by the higher education institutions' own research resources and by resources obtained from the Committee for Scientific Research (KBN) in the form of various types of grants.

Vocational education and training research is considerably influenced by assistance programmes such as UPET, IMPROVE, SMART and, more recently, the Leonardo da Vinci programme. However, these programmes address only selected areas of vocational education and training and the research topics are, as a rule, predetermined. Of particular importance for the development of vocational education and training is research on modular training and on topics related to the quality of education.

There is a pressing need for a research policy in the area of vocational education and training, particularly in view of the reform of secondary school education which is to be introduced in two years time. It would be very desirable to have a scientific institute or a higher education institution made responsible for the co-ordination of vocational education and training research. However, financial constraints make it unlikely that a completely new institution will be set up for this purpose. It would also be advisable to develop mechanisms to implement the results of research. This could be done through contracts between the principal party, the research team and third parties, e.g., schools, where the results of the research could be implemented.

The National Observatory could play a role in initiating research on the labour market and vocational education and training and in disseminating research results through the organisation of seminars and conferences and through the publication of research findings.

4.4 The role of the National Observatory

There is a growing need to centralise information on vocational education and training and its links to the labour market and this creates an opportunity for the National Observatory. In fact, the dynamic growth of the education market has resulted in the dispersal of information on initiatives undertaken in the field and on the role these play in the modernisation of the system. The decentralisation of the Polish system of education has led to greater flexibility but it has also impeded access to information on what is happening on the education market. Areas that are still not covered by systematic research include the private sector, which is undergoing intensive

development, and activities and projects carried out at regional and local levels and by individual schools.

The Observatory has its own network of contacts and is, therefore, in a position to gather data, which is otherwise difficult to access, on regional and local initiatives, the private sector etc., as well as information on nation-wide activities. In order to develop its capacity to gather information, the National Observatory has taken part in several research projects launched by the European Training Foundation, which involved collecting qualitative and quantitative information on different areas of post-secondary education, including information on the role of the social partners, continuing education, teacher/trainer education and regulated professions. The Observatory also carries out its own projects. In co-operation with the Practical Training Centre, it has developed a model for co-operation between vocational education and training schools and enterprises and a project on regional differences in vocational education and training was carried out in 1998.

The National Observatory could analyse and process diagnostic information from different sources in order to present a complete picture of the actual state of developments in, and further needs of, the vocational education and training system. Thus the National Observatory could make its report more complete and, in addition to the report, could provide clients with more detailed information on interesting issues as well as with the names of experts in vocational education and training and related fields.

The National Observatory would like to create opportunities for the exchange of opinions between different actors in the education community and, especially, to bring together representatives of the vocational education and training system and the labour market and to involve social partners in discussions about issues related to the development of vocational education and training. An Internet directory/mailing list, meetings and short seminars would serve this purpose. One very successful initiative was the organisation of discussions on vocational education and training reform between representatives of the vocational education and training system and the labour market, both within the Steering Committee and at a dissemination conference organised by the National Observatory. Some measures to promote social partner involvement in vocational education and training and to encourage small and medium-sized enterprises to participate in the development of vocational education and training are planned for 2000.

The Observatory could also create national and international networks of institutions involved in vocational education and training, match economic entities with scientific institutions, publish guides and reports and organise seminars and conferences. A network of vocational education and training and labour market experts and key institutions has already been created and is still being extended. Access to the databases of the host institution, as well as close contacts with other observatories, could facilitate the establishment of a relevant network of foreign and international institutions and experts.

All the above-mentioned fields of activity, in which the National Observatory could play a significant role, relate to the core functions, i.e., the expert, clearing house and brokering functions, of the National Observatories, as defined in the Terms of Reference for 1999.

5. Responsible bodies

5.1 *Introduction*

In the early 1990s, the first significant changes in the administration of the education system were introduced. The administration of education was separated from general administration and responsibility for running primary schools was transferred to local authorities (*gminas*). The changes were undertaken in order to extend decentralisation in the administration of education and to involve *gminas* more actively in the social sphere. The Education System Act and the Act on Local Authorities constitute the legal basis for the changes.

5.2 *Department of Education*

The Education System Act of 7 September 1991 defines a new division of responsibility and areas of autonomy between the Minister, the "*kurator*" and the school principal.

At the central level, the Minister for National Education determines, co-ordinates and executes the overall policy and directions for the further development of the system, in co-operation with the *voivods* and other involved bodies. The main tasks of the Minister for National Education include:

a) defining the conditions and procedures for admission to schools and education institutions and for transition from one type of school to another;

b) making decisions on framework teaching plans;

c) laying down the core curriculum for general education in all types of schools;

d) laying down the core curricula for education in particular occupations or vocational profiles;

e) defining the conditions and procedures for approving curricula, textbooks and teaching materials;

f) establishing rules for the evaluation, classification and promotion of pupils and for carrying out tests and examinations;

g) setting up the standards for examination requirements; and

h) setting up the rules governing innovative or experimental activities in schools and education institutions.

The Minister for National Education is responsible for the control and implementation of pedagogical supervision all over the country.

In the field of vocational education, the Minister for National Education co-operates with other branch ministers, especially in determining the classification of occupations for the school system. The branch ministers submit applications to introduce new occupations into the classification. These applications include job descriptions and lists of the vocational skills required to carry them out.

Trade unions, autonomous business councils and other economic organisations are also allowed to petition appropriate ministries for the officialisation of new occupations and specialisations in vocational schooling. The Minister for National Education, with input from the appropriate ministers, defines the classification of occupations to be used in the education system by reference to the classification of occupations and specialisations used in the national economy. In the tasks of the Minister for National Education listed above, three areas – b, d and e – require co-operation with branch ministers.

The new regulations of 1997 and 1998 repealed, with some exceptions, the right of branch ministries to run vocational schools[135]. Before this, the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, Transportation, Health, Labour etc. had such a right. This right has been retained by only four ministries, Internal Affairs, Defence, Justice and, temporarily, Culture.

At the regional level, a *"kurator"* is responsible for education matters, on behalf of the *voivod*. According to the Act of 8 August 1996 on Changes in Some Acts Regulating the Functioning of the Economy and Public Administration[136], an education *"kurator"* is the manager of a unit which is a part of general government administration in the voivodship. The *"kurator"* is responsible for running public schools and education institutions, including continuing education centres, for ensuring pedagogical supervision and for organising in-service training for teachers. In co-operation with school principals, the *voivods* and labour offices, the *"kurator"* plans and co-ordinates the development and structure of the school network in the voivodship. Co-operation with the regional labour office is particularly important in this regard and, indeed, is essential for ensuring the adaptation of vocational education to the needs of the labour market.

School principals are the third level in the administration of education. They are responsible for the management of their schools and for pedagogical supervision at school level. They are autonomous in managing school finances, finding enterprises or social partners to support the school and in signing practical training contracts with enterprises. The school principal is the supervisor of all teachers, practical trainers and other employees working in the school, so s/he has the right to hire and dismiss teachers and other staff. Furthermore, a vocational school principal is entitled to change or introduce new occupations or vocational profiles into the school programme, after consultation with the body running and supervising the school and the local labour office.

In activities relating to the management of the school, the principal is supported by a teachers' board.

The Education System Act introduced the possibility of establishing socially representative bodies at all levels of education administration: school councils, regional education councils and the National Education Council. So far, this possibility has been taken up, mostly, on the school level.

The 1995 amendment to the Education System Act was aimed at strengthening the decentralisation of the education system and at increasing the importance of control of education quality within the pedagogical supervision system.

According to the terms of the Act of 17 May 1990 on the Division of Tasks and Responsibilities between *gminas* and the Central Administration[137], the *gminas* gained the right to administer kindergartens operating in their districts. The *"kurator"* may also transfer responsibility for running some schools to the *gmina*. *Gminas* were given some financial[138] and administrative authority to run

135 Dz.U.1997, No 141, item 943, Dz.U. 1998, No 162, item 1122.

136 Dz.U. 1996, No 106, item 496.

137 Dz.U.1990, No 106, item 496.

138 Financing principles – see Chapter 7.

schools and appoint and dismiss school principals. School principals are chosen on the basis of a competition. The *gmina* is responsible for appointing the competition committee, on which it can have two members.

The transfer of tasks and competencies to local authorities has created numerous difficulties. The way of financing education and the division of competencies on personnel matters are still unclear. For example, a "*kurator*" is obliged to ensure common access to education, but s/he does not administer fixed assets such as buildings and land[139]. There are many other problems, not to mention financial difficulties, which have been mentioned elsewhere in this report.

Separate rules of administration are applied to higher education. The Act of 12 September 1990 on Higher Education[140] lays down that the activities of a higher education institution are based on the principles of freedom in research, freedom in artistic creativity and freedom in teaching, which means that every higher education institution has the right to develop its own education and research policy. The degree of autonomy given to higher education institutions is very large. Obligatory regulations tend to favour collegiate, rather than one-person, executive bodies. Faculty councils have gained a considerable degree of autonomy and are entitled to develop their own curricula and to organise their own study programmes.

The regulations arising from the Act substantially limit the competencies of the Minister for National Education. Some of these have been taken over by bodies representing the academic community, such as the Main Council on Higher Education, which plays an advisory role to the Minister. The control of standards, i.e., minimum curricular requirements, the establishment of conditions for officialising new study programmes and supervision, on the national level, of the awarding of doctoral degrees, at assistant professorial and professorial levels, are still in the domain of the State or, directly, of the Minister.

Issues relating to science have been handed over to the Committee for Scientific Research (KBN), which, according to the Act, becomes the main body for administering national scientific and technical policy and which administers funds for research[141].

The level of institutional autonomy varies among the different higher education institutions. The higher education institutions which employ at least 60 professors and in which at least half the faculties are entitled to award a doctoral degree at assistant professorial level, have the right to decide on their own statutes. The statutes of other higher education institutions and of all non-state run higher education institutions have to be approved by the Minister for National Education.

5.3 *Relations between the Department of Education and the Department of Labour and Social Policy*

Although there are regulations on the division of competence between the Minister for National Education and the Minister for Labour and Social Policy, a Co-operation Agreement between the two departments was signed on 14 May 1993. The agreement indicates areas of co-operation in, amongst others:

139 Development in education in Poland, Warsaw, 1996.

140 Dz. U. 1990, No 65.

141 Act of 12 January 1991 on the Establishment of the Committee for Scientific Research, Dz. U. 1991, No 8, item 28.

- the adaptation of education programmes and curricula to current and estimated future needs of the economy;
- the development of continuing education for the unemployed and people threatened with unemployment;
- measures to reduce unemployment among graduates; and
- the development of a system of vocational orientation and guidance.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy committed itself to providing the Ministry of National Education with six-month statistical analyses and prognoses on the structure of unemployment, covering the unemployed and people threatened with unemployment, on a national scale, and with regional statistics on graduates and young employees and on the qualification structure of the unemployed and job seekers who have been directed to training or retraining.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy also committed itself to preparing information on the demand on regional labour markets for different types of vocational education and continuing training. This information will allow the Ministry of National Education to meet current labour market needs through the development of out-of-school forms of education and also to decide on, and plan for, what is needed in terms of education provision. In addition, both departments agreed to work together to develop and implement a basic policy on vocational orientation and guidance.

5.4 *Conclusions*

In the light of the division of competencies and the increase in the number of bodies involved in the management of the education system – central administrative bodies, such as the Ministry of National Education and branch ministries, *voivods*, "*kurators*", school principals, schools, pupils/students and employers – it is evident that good co-ordination in management activities and in the preparation and dissemination of full and clear information on education policy goals and the results of their implementation must become a key element of education policy.

6. Legislation

Because there is such a large number of legislative acts regulating the functioning of the education and the vocational education and training systems, we will concentrate only on basic legislation of a higher order, i.e., Acts of government, and on some orders which are relevant to the reforms carried out by the Ministries of National Education and of Labour and Social Policy.

6.1 *Legal regulations of the Ministry of National Education*

The basic legislative acts regulating the education system for young people and adults are:

- the Education System Act of 7 September 1991, as amended in 1995 and 1998[142]; and
- the School System Act of 8 January 1999[143].

The most important legislative acts for the higher education sector are:

- the Act on Higher Education of 12 September 1990[144]; and
- the Act on Higher Institutions of Vocational Instruction of 26 June 1997[145].

6.1.1 *The education system for youths and adults*

All issues relating to the functioning of the education system and the vocational education and training system are regulated within the parameters of the general regulations on education. The Education System Act of 7 September 1991 replaced the Act of 1961 but it did not introduce changes in the principal kinds and structures of schools and schooling. The new law defines, amongst others:

- the types of schools and education institutions encompassed by the education system;
- the bodies authorised to establish and run schools and education institutions and their obligations;
- the administration of schools and education institutions;
- the role and activities of social bodies in the education system;
- the organisation of training, education and care facilities in schools and education institutions;
- the organisation of teachers' training and continuing training;
- the financing of schools and public institutions;

142 Dz. U. 1991, No 95, item 425, Dz.U. 1996, No 47, item 211, Dz.U. 1998, No 117, item 759.

143 Dz. U. 1999, No 12, item 96.

144 Financing principles – see chapter 7.

145 Dz. U. 1997, No 96, item. 590, Dz.U. 1998, No 106, item 668.

- the establishment of private schools and institutions;
- the tasks to be carried out by bodies running public schools and education institutions; and
- the tasks to be carried out by bodies involved in the pedagogical supervision of schools and education institutions.

The amendment to the Act, which was accepted on 25 July 1998[146], introduced significant changes into the school system. The new regulations came into force on 1 January 1999, except for regulations on some areas, including the functioning and establishment of new types of schools[147].

As regards education and vocational education and training, the most important points arising from this legislation and, especially, from the amendment to the Education System Act are outlined below.

- **The administrative system for education has been modified by changing the areas for which the different levels of administration are responsible.**
- **A new school system structure has been created by introducing new types of schools and by changing the length of the courses on particular levels:**

  a) six-year primary school;

  b) three-year gymnasium;

  c) post-gymnasium schools, which, in turn, are divided into;

  - three-year specialised lycea, leading to a secondary school graduation certificate (*Matura*),
  - two-year vocational schools, which end with a vocational examination and give graduates the opportunity to continue their education in a two-year supplementary lyceum,
  - two-year supplementary lycea, which enable vocational school graduates to obtain a *Matura* certificate and
  - post-lyceum schools, which give students the opportunity to complete their vocational education and may end with a vocational examination.

- **Procedures for promoting pupils onto higher levels of education have changed and a system of tests at the end of primary school and gymnasium introduced.**

  On the basis of the Education System Act, a Central Examination Commission has been set up and the Minister for National Education orders regional examination commissions to be set up and defines the geographical area they cover.

  The tasks of the Central Examination Commission are:

  - to work out requirement standards for tests and examinations;
  - to analyse the results of tests and examinations and to report on the level of pupils' achievements at different stages of education to the Minister for National Education; and
  - to prepare and disseminate teacher development programmes in the field of assessment.

  The tasks of regional examination commissions are to include:

  - carrying out tests and examinations, including vocational tests and examinations; and
  - preparing examination tasks and tests and training examiners and examinees.

146 Dz. U. 1998, No 117, item 725.

147 Dz. U. 1999, No 162, item 1126.

The central and regional examination commissions are supervised by the Minister for National Education.

- **Pedagogical supervision is regulated.**

  The Act assigns the Minister for National Education the duty of pedagogical supervision of schools and institutions as well as that of co-ordinating nationwide supervision. In a voivodship, pedagogical supervision is one of duties of the "*kurator*". The supervision of teachers in schools and education institutions and of practical trainers in vocational schools is the responsibility of the school principal or other teachers occupying managerial positions. Detailed goals and the principles of supervision are given in the amended Order of 31 December 1996, which was issued on the basis of the Act[148].

  In 1999, a new order on pedagogical supervision was introduced[149].

- **A procedure for creating a classification system of occupations for vocational schools has been established.**

  In accordance with the Education System Act, the Minister for National Education, with input from the appropriate ministers, defines the classification of occupations to be used in the education system by reference to the classification of occupations and specialisations used in the national economy. The amendment makes provision for trade unions, autonomous business councils and other economic organisations to petition appropriate ministries for the institution of new occupations and specialisations in vocational schooling. The classification is a systematic description of the occupations for which training is provided in the school system and indicates the types of schools that cover each occupation. This classification is narrower than the old one and fits into the classification of occupations and specialisations used in the national economy. The classification was amended by the Order of 31 May 1999 and now comprises a list of 179 occupations[150]. The division into occupational groups in this classification corresponds to the division in the classification of occupations used for labour market purposes, which was introduced by the Order of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of 20 April 1995. This order was later amended to take account of new occupations.

- **The concepts of "core curriculum" and "vocational profile" have been introduced.**

  The amendment to the Act enables the Minister for National Education to define, on the basis of an order, the vocational education profiles that correspond to different economic areas. These profiles refer to the different types of activity groups listed in the Polish Classification of Activities, which was introduced by the Order of the Council of Ministers of October 7, 1997[151].

- **Regulations on practical training have been introduced.**

  The Act allows for practical vocational education to take place in enterprises, state-run institutions and workplaces, individual farms and organisations run by individuals or other legal entities. Detailed regulations on the organisation and financing of practical vocational education and the rights and obligations of both pupils and education organisers are contained in the Order of the Council of Ministers of 31 December 1992 and its amendment of 2 December 1994[152]. The Order states that the basis for organising practical vocational education outside of school workshops is contractual and that the contract in question is between the school and the

148 Dz. U. 1997, No 9, item 46.

149 Dz. U. 1999, No 67, item 759.

150 Dz. U. 1999, No 52, item 535.

151 Dz. U. 1997, No 128, item 829.

152 Dz. U. 1992, No 97, item 479, Dz. U. 1994, No 130, item 648.

workplace or another school which has a workshop. The Order details the principles for organising and financing practical vocational education as well as the rights and obligations of vocational pupils. Of particular significance to the reform of the vocational education and training system was the introduction by the Minister for National Education (following the 1993 Order on Matters Relating to the Types, Organisation and Operational Principles of Education Institutions and its 1996 amendment) of a new type of education institution, the Centres for Practical Education[153].

- **Rules on the regulation of the continuing education system have been introduced.**

  The Minister for Education has the right to determine the operating rules for centres of continuing education[154]. These centres were created to provide training and to upgrade the skills of adults and are playing an important role in the creation of a network of distance education facilities in Poland. In the context of including practical instruction in adult education, regulations on establishing workshops to provide practical training in the centres have been introduced. Their main task is to support the vocational education and training didactic process in continuing education centres and other adult education institutions.

- **The decentralisation of the education system has been strengthened while a system for monitoring and controlling the quality of education by means of state pedagogical supervisory bodies has been established.**

  The responsibilities of bodies that manage schools have been determined, with the emphasis on appropriate work organisation and conditions. Local councils have been granted the right to establish public primary school districts and systems subject to the approval of the education "*kurator*". According to the amended Act, setting up and running post-gymnasium schools – specialised lycea, vocational schools, supplementary lycea and post-lyceum schools – are the responsibility of the *powiat*. A school or an education institution can be set up by a territorial administrative unit or by individuals and legal entities. Territorial administration units are allowed to establish and run only public schools and education institutions. Certain ministers, i.e., the Ministries of Internal Affairs, National Defence and Justice are also entitled to run public schools[155].

- **The framework for running other education activities has been laid down.**

  The regulations on economic activities are applicable to any education activity that is not identical with running a school or an education institution. New amendments to the Education System Act allow for individuals and legal entities to set up schools and education institutions, upon registering with a relevant territorial administrative unit and meeting certain conditions.

6.1.2 *Higher education*

To date, vocational education issues at the higher level have been regulated by orders and resolutions of the Ministry of National Education. The Higher Education Act of 12 September 1990[156] did not cover the vocational title of licentiate or the three-year vocational programmes which have been brought into being since that year. The concept of licentiate was introduced on 9 April 1992 in the Order of the Minister for National Education on Specifying Types of Diplomas and Vocational

153 Dz. U. 1993, No 95, item. 434, Dz. U. 1996, No 44, item 192.

154 Dz.U. 1992, No 81, item. 418, Dz. U. 1997, No 156, item 1022.

155 The list of relevant ministers is included in the Council of Ministers Order of 22 December 1998, Dz. Ust. No 162, item 1134.

156 Dz. U. 1990, No 63.

Titles as well as Model Diplomas to be Awarded by Higher Education Institutions[157]. In practice, the concept is used to define a graduate of a 3-year programme offered by either a state- or a non-state-run higher education institution. The Education System Act does not differentiate between academic and non-academic vocational higher education institutions.

Separate regulations on higher vocational education are to be found in the Higher Vocational Schools Act of 26 June 1997[158]. This act recognises that there is a dual system of education at the higher level and that this system is made up of academic and non-academic higher education institutions. In justifying this approach, the initiators state that the increase in participation in education in recent years is the result of the expansion of academic higher education institutions and that this has put a strain on personnel and material resources in the sector. A further increase in participation rates would call for the building of a new education sector, which would use shorter education cycles to prepare highly trained personnel for different economic and social sectors.

The Act covers state-run higher vocational education institutions, excluding military colleges, which provide professional licentiate or engineer programmes. The regulations of the Act also apply to non-state-run higher vocational education institutions.

Since 1998, the first higher vocational schools have been created on the existing base of teacher training colleges, which had remained under the supervision of the education "*kurators*", and of the best-equipped post-lyceum schools. Essential additional investment in existing buildings is to come from local sources. It is intended that future higher vocational schools will be tied to the local labour market and that they will be supported by the local administration.

The Higher Vocational Schools Act is based on a separation of administrative and education functions. The Act foresees the introduction of a council made up of employers' representatives, the local administration and economic organisations. The Chancellor will be a one-person representative of the institution. The Dean and the Senate will fulfil the knowledge-education function. The provisions of the Act are aimed at ensuring freedom and flexibility in the operation and financing of higher vocational schools. There are also provisions to strengthen quality control in education through the establishment of the Accreditation Commission of Higher Vocational Schools.

In order to implement the provisions of the Higher Vocational Schools Act, the Minister for National Education has issued the following orders:

- the Order of 28 January 1998 on the Size and Composition of the Accreditation Commission of Higher Vocational Education and on Procedures for Appointing and Dismissing Members of the Commission[159];
- the Order of 15 January 1998 on the Data and Information Required to Apply for Permission to Establish Non-state-run Higher Vocational Education Institutions[160]; and
- the Order of 15 January 1998 on Types of Diplomas and Model Diplomas Awarded by Higher Vocational Education Institutions[161].

Among the other changes introduced by the Higher Vocational Schools Act was the extension of the range of bodies entitled to set up state-run higher vocational education institutions. For example, a voivodship parliament is now allowed to apply for permission to establish such an institution.

157 MP 1992, No 12, MP 1993, No 33, MP 1993, No 57.

158 Dz. U. 1997, No 96, item 590, Dz.U 1998, No 106, item 698.

159 Dz. U. 1998, No 11, item 38.

160 Dz. U. 1998, No 13, item 58.

161 Dz. U. 1998, No 13, item 59.

According to the Act of 4 September 1997[162] on Departments in Government Administration, the Department of Higher Education, which is responsible for higher education issues and archives, comes under the supervision of a minister who has specific responsibility for higher schooling issues. The provisions of this Act came into force on 1 April 1999.

In 1998, the Sejm (the Polish Parliament) accepted the Act of 17 July 1998 on Loans and Credits for Students[163]. The Act regulates the procedures by which higher education students receive loans and credits from the Loan and Credit Fund. The amount lent to a student in a single academic year is limited to the equivalent of six times the average monthly wage in the enterprise sector and the total credit period cannot exceed six years. The Student Loan and Credit Commission, appointed by the Minister for National Education, supervises all matters regarding the granting and repayment of student credits and loans.

6.2 *Legal regulations of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy*

The Act of 14 December 1994 on Employment and to Counteract Unemployment[164] outlines the measures undertaken by the state to diminish the effects of unemployment, to promote employment and to encourage the vocational motivation of the unemployed and other job seekers. Among the areas covered by the Act are:

- the roles of employment bodies and councils;
- the principles and forms of measures to counteract unemployment and to ease the effects of joblessness;
- the vocational motivation of graduates;
- support for regional and local labour markets;
- employment as part of the Volunteer Work Corps; and
- the principles underlying the Labour Fund and for financing expenditures via the Labour Fund.

The measures set forth in the Act are carried out by the Minister for Labour and Social Policy with the aid of the National Labour Office and the regional and local labour offices.

The Act has been amended several times, but the amendments have not introduced any significant changes in the status of the different actors or in the implementation of labour market programmes.

In addition, the Act on Employment and to Counteract Unemployment obliges the Minister for Labour and Social Policy to issue a set of decrees concerning, amongst others, a classification of occupations and specialisations based on the needs of the labour market and detailed principles on carrying out employment mediation and vocational guidance, organising training for the unemployed and setting up job clubs.

162 Dz. U. 1997, No 141, item 943.

163 Dz. U. 1998, No 108, item 685.

164 Dz. U. 1995, No 1, item 1.

The Order of the Minister for Labour and Social Policy of 20 April 1995 on the Classification of Occupations and Specialisations for Labour Market Purposes and the Scope of its Application[165] contains the names and descriptions of 2,392 occupations and specialisations. The classification was prepared to international standards. It allows labour offices to gather information on unemployment by occupation. It is also used to gather data which can be used to inform employment, education and vocational training policies and to support employment mediation and vocational guidance.

The Order of the Minister for Labour and Social Policy of 16 June 1998 on Detailed Principles for Carrying Out Labour Mediation and Vocational Guidance, for Organising Training of the Unemployed, Creating a Methodological Base for Vocational Information and Guidance and for Organising and Financing Job Clubs (amended on 28 December 1998) defines, *inter alia*, the procedures for organising training of the unemployed and for analysing training effectiveness and sets out the tasks of the Methodological Centre for Vocational Information and Guidance of the National Labour Office .

It is worth mentioning that the Act of 24 July 1998 on Changes in Some Acts Defining the Competencies of Public Administrative Bodies in the Context of the Reform of the State System has introduced some meaningful changes into the organisation of the employment service. The changes will come into effect on 01 January 2000 and will mean that the tasks set out in the Act will be carried out by the Minister For Labour and Social Policy, with the help of the National Labour Office and local authorities at voivodship, *voivod* and *powiat* levels.

6.3 *Interdepartmental regulations*

The principles underlying co-operation between the Minister for National Education and other ministries representing certain occupations are outlined in the Order of the Council of Ministers of 05 August 1997[166].

The vocational training and remuneration of young people are regulated by the Order of the Council of Ministers of 28 May 1996[167], which deals with:

- vocational training for young people;
- bodies involved in carrying out vocational training; and
- the regulation of pay for young people.

Another piece of legislation which is relevant to the sphere of vocational education and training is the Joint Order of the Minister for National Education and the Minister for Labour and Social Policy of October 12, 19993 on Raising the Level of the General and Vocational Qualifications of Adults[168]. The regulations are applicable to people who want to improve the level either of their general education or their vocational qualifications as well as to workplaces and organisers of adult education in in-school and out-of-school institutions. The Order deals in some detail with:

- training that takes place in different school forms;
- training, retraining and in-service training in out-of-school forms; and
- principles and processes in acquiring the titles of qualified and master worker.

165 Dz. U. 1995, No 48, item 253.

166 Dz. U. 1997, No 100, item 621.

167 Dz. U. 1996, No 60, item 274.

168 Dz. U. 1993, No 103, item 472.

7. Financing of vocational education and training and continuing training

The rules for financing vocational education and training are laid down in a number of pieces of legislation on the education system. In the 1990s, important changes were introduced in this field prompted by the following factors[169].

In the early 1990s, **the education system level of debt** had reached such a level that it jeopardised the fundamental functioning of education institutions. This situation eased as a result of government subsidy in 1994. However, this level of debt not only influenced the expenditure structure of the education budget but also resulted in individuals being charged for part of the cost of education.

In 1991, changes in the education management system were introduced and the process of handing some education-related tasks over to local government began. During the first year the local governments took over 92% of kindergartens[170]. The transfer of the schools to the *gmina* was accompanied by an education subsidy which, formerly, was part of the budget subsidy to a given school. The shift from direct to indirect budget financing through local government was clearly marked out in the state budget. In 1991-1993, the share of budget subsidy for schools increased at the expense of other forms of childcare.

At primary level, the consequence of government education policy is that the development of complete secondary schools is supported at the expense of basic vocational schools and this has significant financial implications. The drastic drop in the contribution of state-owned enterprises to financing vocational schools and, in particular, basic vocational schools[171], merits special attention.

The creation of an alternative network of fee-paying non-public schools, education institutions and higher schools run by individuals and corporate bodies is one way of expanding sources of education financing. In 1990-1991, the share of education expenditure in gross domestic product decreased as a result of a shift in the current expenditure structure of the central budget. This drop had to be balanced by an increased role in education financing for local governments, who had to supplement subsidies from the central budget with subsidies from their own income.

The establishment of a non-public education sector has meant the introduction of tuition fees and, despite budget subsidies for non-public schools with public school status, these are high and still increasing. In September 1997, tuition fees in all non-public schools totalled PLN 25,100,000 and amounted to PLN 250 per pupil, on average. In September 1998, this total amount increased to PLN 32,600,000 or PLN 287 per pupil.

169 I. Białecki and others, Education in a changing society, Centrum Badań Polityki Naukowej i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, wyd. II, Warsaw 1996.

170 Act of 17 May 1990 on the Division of Tasks and Competencies between *Gmina* and Government Administrative Organs, Dz.U 1990, No 34, item 198. Under this Law, the running of kindergartens became the *gmina*'s "own competency".

171 *Gmina* expenditure on education in 1991, National Statistics Office, Warsaw 1991.

7.1 Financing of schools and education institutions

The central budget still remains the main source of education financing. The Education System Act makes the State responsible for ensuring sufficient resources to maintain public primary and post-primary schools run by the *gmina*, including the remuneration of teachers (Art. 5a). Other sources of financing include: *gmina* budgets, student contributions, donations, foundations and *gmina's* own resources from fees for some education activities.

Table 7.1 Share of education expenditure in gross domestic product

Year	Gross domestic product PLN million	Public expenditure* on education		Expenditure on higher education	
		PLN million	Share in gross domestic product %	PLN million	Share in gross domestic product %
1993	155,780.0	7,098.0	4.56	1,271.7	0.82
1994	210,407.3	11,497.4	5.46	1,633.1	0.78
1995	288,701.3	15,526.0**	5.38	2,177.5	0.75
1996	385,448.1	24,014.1**	6.23	3,011.3	0.78
1997	469,372.1	29,717.7**	6.33	3,763.6	0.80
1998	551,110.0	28,466.0**	5.20		

* *Aggregate expenditures of central budget and gmina budgets.*
** *Including education subsidy.*

Source: "Development of education in Poland, Report for Ministry of National Education", Warsaw, 1996 and calculation by the author on the basis of: "Higher education institutions and their financing in 1997.", National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1998; "Higher education institutions and their financing in 1998 r.", National Statistics Office, Warsaw, 1999.

During the initial years of transformation, when the education institutions were taken over by local governments, the share of gross domestic product spent on education in grew from 3.9% in 1990 to 4.5% in 1992. In the period 1993-1998, this has stabilised at around 4.4-4.6% (excluding the education subsidy)[172].

Central budget expenditure on education includes current expenditure and capital expenditure for all types of schools and various forms of child care and includes the cost of upgrading teachers' vocational qualifications.

Since 1 January 1997, post-primary schools receive their funding through *voivods*, primary schools run by Schools Superintendents receive funding directly and those run by the *gmina* are funded through the *gmina*.

172 Education in the school year 1998/99, op. cit.

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Table 7.2 Structure of public expenditure on education by source of financing

Level of education and source of financing	Years							
	1994		1995		1997*		1998	
	PLN million	%	PLN million	%	PLN million	%	PLN million	%
1. Kindergartens	**957.2**	**100.0**	**1,251.1**	**100.0**	**2,087.5**	**100.0**		
a) central budget	9.3	1.0			19.2	0.9		
b) *gmina* budgets	947.9	99.0	1,251.1		2,068.3	99.1		
2. Primary schools	**6,247.6**	**100.0**	**8,686.5**	**100.0**	**11,033.1**	**100.0**		
a) central budget	4,137.2	66.2	5,608.0	64.5	673.6	6.1		
b) *gmina* budgets	2,110.4	33.7	3,078.5	35.4	10,359.5	93.9		
3. Secondary schools	**2,682.3**	**100.0**	**2,771.8**	**100.0**	**4,678.1**	**100.0**		
a) central budget	2,376.7	88.6	2,508.4	90.5	3,368.5	72.0		
b) *gmina* budgets	305.6	11.4	263.6	9.4	1,309.6	28.0		
4. Higher schools	**1,633.1**	**100.0**	**2,177.5**	**100.0**	**3,763.6**	**100.0**	**4,283.0**	**100.0**
a) central budget	1,626.4	99.5	2,174.7	99.9	3,752.2	99.7	4,272.3	99.7
b) *gmina* budgets	6.7	0.4	2.8	0.1	11.4	0.3	10.7	0.3

* *Education subsidy not included.*

Source: Statistical Annual 1998, National Statistics Office, Warsaw 1998; Higher education institutions and their financing in 1997r op.cit.; Higher education institutions and their financing in 1998 r. op.cit.; Information on the implementation of basic tasks and budget in 1997 in schools and higher education institutions, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw 1998.

Allocation of the budget subsidy is carried out on the basis of an algorithm developed by the Ministry of National Education after consultation with local governments. This algorithm, which is reviewed annually, takes into account the nature of a given *gmina* (urban or rural), the size of the education institution and the expected rate of growth in groups of expenditure and, in recent years, the number of conversion pupils in schools run by the relevant *gmina*. According to the Law on *Gmina* Financing[173] of 22 December 1995 the total subsidy for education activities cannot be less than 6.6% of planned central budget income.

Apart from central budget subsidy, the *gmina* have their own resources, including various taxes, rents for *gmina* real estate etc. The amount of these resources depends on the personal incomes of *gmina* inhabitants and on the financial standing of the *gmina* itself.

Persistent financial shortages, which were particularly severe in the education sector in the early 1990s, resulted in the introduction of parental contributions and an active search for financing by schools themselves.

The Education System Act allows for schools to procure financing from various sources on condition, however, that these resources are not spent on salaries. The share of these resources in the school budget depends, to some extent, on the school management's spirit of entrepreneurship and, to some extent, on the existing infrastructure and needs.

173 Dz. U. 1995, No 154, item 794.

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The upgrading of the vocational qualifications of teachers is also financed from the central budget on the basis of Ministry of National Education Regulation of 10 August 1992 on teacher training institutions[174]. The *gmina*, School Superintendents and branch ministries are supposed, each year, to deduct 2.5% from planned total teachers' remuneration costs for skills upgrading of teachers. In practice, they rarely do so and the provision is not enforced.

Teacher training needs are assessed at the *voivod* level and a certain sum of money is reserved for co-financing of extra-mural higher education and postgraduate studies for teachers. Priority is given to requalification of teachers for specialisations in particular demand in a given *voivod*.

Kindergartens and, primary and post-primary, non-public schools with public school status can receive financing from the budget up to the level of 50% of current per capita expenditure of a similar public institution in a given territorial unit[175]. The subsidy is calculated individually for each school and, accordingly, the co-financing is different across *gmina*s and *voivods* and is dependent on public expenditure. As a result, the absolute value of co-financing depends indirectly on the financial standing and wealth of the *gmina* and, in practice, it is extremely difficult to receive a 50% level of co-financing.

7.2 *Higher education financing*

Since 1991, budget subsidies for higher education schools are included in two different parts of the central budget and are paid through two different channels. The Ministry of National Education finances teaching and learning, financial assistance for students and construction costs. The Scientific Research Committee finances research. Since 1993, the allocation of subsidies for education among higher schools supervised by the Ministry of National Education is based on an algorithm. Under this algorithm, the amount of the subsidy is dependent on the number of conversion students and the cost-intensity ratio of studies, the number of highly qualified academic teachers and the amount of the subsidy in the previous year. The algorithm does not differentiate between students in 3-year and 5-year cycles. The division of the subsidy among faculties and departments is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself.

Higher education institutions' own revenues are another source of financing. Under Article 23 of the Higher Education Act of 12 September 1990, non-budget forms of financing have been introduced. The Council of Ministers Regulation of 27 August 1991 on higher education institutions financial management[176], allows for the imposition of fees for repeat day studies and for extra-mural, evening and postgraduate studies.

The inadequacy of budget subsidies made it necessary for higher education institutions to look for other financing sources. The share of tuition fees in the revenue structure of public higher education institutions has risen from 3.9% in 1993 to 13.1% in 1998. This process was accompanied by a reduction in the budget subsidy for education; its share in the revenue structure of public higher schools dropped from 69.6% in 1993 to 58.5% in 1998.

Until now, only public higher education institutions received budget subsidies. Non-public higher education institutions are almost entirely financed from their own revenues. In 1997, 94.9% of revenues came from tuition fees. Non-public higher education institutions, in the same way as public institutions, can receive donations and support from foundations, including from abroad.

174 Dz.U 1992, No 63, item 317.

175 *Gmina*, in the case of kindergartens and primary schools and *voivods*, in the case of post primary schools.

176 Dz.U. 1991, No 84, item 380.

7.3 *Financing of continuing education*

There is no legislative basis for continuing education, and expenditure on continuing education of adults is not specifically identified in the budget. Neither is an employer legally obliged to implement an active policy of continuing education of workers.

There are four possible sources of finance for continuing education:

- central budget resources – mainly for school-based forms;
- employers – for school-based and non-school forms;
- payments by participants; and
- foreign assistance programmes.

Adult schools are mainly financed from the central budget, including participation by workers in school-based forms. Employers are only required to cover allowances due in relation to education. Under the Regulation[177] of 12 October 1993, the employer is obliged to grant a worker education leave with pay and give him part of a working day off.

Education of workers in non-school forms is fully paid for by either the employer or employee. The employer must cover all costs for a worker sent by him to take part in the course and, if a worker takes part in the course at her/his own initiative, it is up to her/him to pay.

The evolution of adult education provision in recent years indicates that the limitation on central budget financing has gone hand in hand with increased financing by other government and non-government sources. In other words, the development of adult education took place due to the commercialisation of the education services sector.

The transfer of responsibility for running schools to local governments was the most important change to have taken place in the past decade in the field of education management and financing. The greatest problem with this process remains the insufficient financing of education and the financial problems of the *gmina* themselves, whose tasks have been extended without any additional resources. The structure of current expenditure on education, which is dominated by expenditure on salaries (80%), does not favour the efficient use of financial instruments.

7.4 *Financial contributions from bilateral and multilateral supporters during the transition period*

Foreign assistance is defined as a transfer of resources from a donor to a beneficiary country, which is not derived from the operation of market forces and is not delivered in accordance with market-based principles[178]. Foreign assistance has been made available to Poland since the second half of 1989. It was initiated by the G-7 states' summit in April 1989, at which the European Union (at that time the European Community) was assigned the task of co-ordinating aid for the reforming countries of Central Europe. All G-24 states joined the aid effort, to a varying degree. Assistance in

177 Regulation of the Minister for National Education and Minister for Labour and Social Policy of October 12, 1993 on the Rules and Terms for Upgrading the Vocational Skills and the General Education of Adults, Dz.U 1993, No 103, item 472.

178 Barre, W.H. Luers i in., *Final Report of the LEWS Task Force on Western Assistance to Transition in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Hungary and Poland: Moving Beyond Assistance*, Institute for East-West Studies, New York 1992.

the area of human resource development became one of the priorities of the initiative. Foreign assistance to Poland is primarily of a non-reimbursable form.

By source, foreign assistance falls into three categories:

- bilateral assistance, offered by governments of various states;
- multilateral assistance, offered by international organisations or financial institutions; and
- aid from private sources.

Foreign assistance is delivered as:

- donations;
- aid in kind; and
- technical assistance.

7.4.1 *Evolution of the process for assistance co-ordination and delivery*

During the initial period of assistance delivery to Poland, there was a distinct lack of an efficient co-ordination mechanism. As an experienced Polish co-ordinator of foreign aid says, *"Declarations and diplomatic language cannot hide the fact that it was impossible to establish a mechanism to effectively co-ordinate aid efforts and the operations of individual donors. It seems that the combined pressures of time, political obligations, different administrative procedures and sometimes different interests and priorities made it impossible for the donors in the early 1990s to produce a coherent donor-t- recipient assistance strategy and action plan fitting the overall development strategy of the country, Later on, 'ad-hocery' and improvisation was replaced by more advanced and organised approaches, but bilateralism always prevailed over co-ordination"*[179].

During the early 1990s, efficient co-ordination was not in place on the Polish side either. The Polish administration, busy with reforming the state, was unable to develop an effective co-ordination mechanism. Moreover, some donor countries excluded, outright, any possibility of co-ordination by the Polish side, by making decisions independently and liaising directly with beneficiary institutions. This refers to assistance in vocational education and training as well. The Task Force for Human Resources and Training (BKKK) gradually gained influence on the majority of vital financial decisions regarding vocational education. However, the aforementioned limitations as well as the Ministry of National Education's lack of a coherent strategy for utilisation of assistance, which resulted mostly from the frequent changes of government, unfavourably affected the efficiency of co-ordination.

The Polish authorities have had a much greater say in identifying projects to be financed from the Phare fund because, in principle, these projects were developed at the request of the Polish side and were formalised by contractual-financial memoranda with the European Commission. However, the fact that the terms of reference for the majority of the programmes were drawn up by western experts exerted a hidden control which, often, limited the Polish parties' influence. This, together with a long time lapse between the inception of a programme and its delivery – up to 2 years in some cases –, and the rapid changes under way in Poland sometimes led to the situation where projects were no longer in line with the Polish side's expectations. The lengthy procedures of the Phare programme hindered the prompt introduction of necessary changes to projects.

179 P. Samecki, *A Recipient's View on Assistance to Transition: The Case of Poland*, 'The International Journal of Technical Cooperation' 1997, vol. 3, no 1, p. 110-117.

7.4.2 *The financial volume of assistance*

It is difficult to estimate precisely the volume of aid funds. This is mainly due to the fact that bilateral assistance funds reach Poland mainly in the form of technical assistance or aid in kind, rather than cash, and only the donor states are in possession of precise information about their volume, allocation by project, and form. This data has not often been made available to the recipients, especially in the early 1990s, whether for political reasons or because of the difficulty in obtaining it due to the complexity of mechanisms for fund appropriation in donor states. Only in the Phare programme is it possible to relatively precisely estimate the volume of funds earmarked for education undertakings, including, in particular, the reform of vocational education and training. According to a rough estimate, foreign assistance resources assigned to education constitute 2.7-3% of annual outlays on education and higher education[180]. The proportion of foreign assistance in vocational education and training is significantly smaller, due to the fact that the lion's share of resources earmarked for education was appropriated by the Tempus programme, which targeted the higher education sector. The Task Force for Human Resources and Training's estimate of the volume of bilateral assistance funds for vocational education and training carried out from 1990-1999 is ECU 15,000,000, and ECU 17,000,000 in the case of Phare assistance. Those figures are probably an overestimate, because projects would have objectives either not directly related to vocational education or on the border of vocational education and training. The annual average assistance between 1990-1997 (ECU 3,700,000) constitutes 0.6% of all public outlay on vocational education (ECU 635,000,000)[181]. However, the actual significance of assistance programmes is greater than the figures may suggest, because assistance funds, and Phare funds in particular, have been used for financing innovative undertakings which would not have attracted other funding in a situation of, first, economic crisis and, second, rigid financial policies – and their related cuts in public expenditure – implemented by successive governments.

180 T. Kozek, *Extent and forms of foreign assistance in the field of management education* (conference materials) in: "Internationalizing Managerial Studies – Experience, Dillemas and Perspectives", Fundacja Edukacyjna Przedsiębiorczości, Łódź 1995; J.Dietl, *Report on Education and Training in Poland during the Transformation of the Socio-economic System*, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Conference on Education and Economy in Central and Eastern Europe, Paris 1992.

181 The year 1995 was considered.

8. The contribution of bilateral and multilateral assistance to the reform of vocational education and training

8.1 *Characteristics of the assistance programmes and their impact on the vocational education and training reform*

8.1.1 *Bilateral assistance programmes*

Bilateral assistance programmes delivered by G-24 states are usually in the form of technical assistance. Less frequently, the aid comes in kind, e.g., as equipment or training and, least frequently, as direct financial donations to selected Polish institutions. Bilateral assistance projects are managed by organisations from the donor country and the co-ordinator, or co-ordinators, of the whole assistance initiative is/are nominated by the donor.

Bilateral assistance projects have focused primarily on staff development, especially of managerial staff, initially by means of direct training delivered by western training providers and, in the subsequent phase, through support for the development of new training providers in Poland and the modernisation of those already in operation.

Programmes focusing directly on school vocational training and non-managerial staff development have definitely been in the minority. Germany has had the largest input to the reform of the Polish system of vocational education and training. Long-standing co-operation between Polish institutions and the Federal Institute for Vocational Training in Berlin has resulted in the development of training curricula to teach "Fundamentals of the economy" in schools of economics and "An outline of the market economy" in other schools. These are, at present, in use at 140 schools in Poland. The German contribution to the development of training in crafts is also substantial. Projects funded by other countries, such as Denmark, France and Great Britain, which aimed at developing links between individual schools, towns or regions, have not contributed significantly to the reform of the system.

8.1.2 *The Phare programme*

Phare-funded projects are managed in a decentralised manner by Project Management Units. So far, all Phare-funded projects in vocational education at the secondary level have been managed by the Task Force for Human Resources and Training of the Co-operation Fund (BCC).

- **The Programme of Assistance for Poland in the Area of Vocational Education and Training – Phare 90 (1990-1995), ECU 2,800,000**

  This was the first assistance programme for Poland in the field of vocational education and training financed by the European Union. By definition, the programme had an intersectoral

character and responded to the needs expressed by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Social partners were also beneficiaries of the programme. The various projects were either primarily designed in response to the most immediate needs of their beneficiaries or did not have a direct link with vocational education and training reform. As a result, only ECU 800,000 was spent on aims directly relating to vocational education and training reform. The following is a selection of the most significant projects.

- The "Training in Transition"[182] report, produced by an international team of experts, was a thorough analysis of the Polish vocational education and training system and its social and economic environment, and contained recommendations for the Polish government as regards directions for the reform of that system. The practical implications of the report, which received very positive feedback, were, however, of little significance. The report's recommendations are, to a great extent, still valid.
- The "Modernisation through Partnership" project, which was the first attempt at establishing links between Polish and western vocational schools, aimed at exchanging experience and initiating interest in education innovation in Polish schools. This trial project, which involved 5 Polish schools, was not continued in later Phare-funded programmes. However, similar initiatives were financed, on a modest scale, under bilateral assistance programmes, in particular those involving Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.
- A project dealing with initiating work on curriculum modernisation for the metallurgy and trading professions was later continued under the UPET and IMPROVE programmes and also under a German project with the participation of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training. An expert paper was also produced on a strategy for curriculum change in vocational training[183].
- Work commenced on establishing a system for distance learning and support for the Open Learning Centre was later continued under a multilateral assistance programme focused on distance learning and financed by Phare.

As mentioned earlier, other initiatives delivered under the programme have not had a direct impact on the reform of vocational education and training. However, some have been of key significance in other reform areas. For example, the bases for social dialogue in Poland were developed under the programme jointly with the Ministry of Labour, which then bore fruit in the establishment of the Trilateral Commission and the signing of the Pact on Enterprise.

■ **The establishment of foreign language training centres – Poland (FLT) – Phare 90 (1992-1994), ECU 600,000**

The programme supported the establishment of Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges in Wroclaw, Legnica and Bydgoszcz. These colleges have become centres of excellence in the area of foreign language teacher vocational training. Support for these centres was continued under the UPET programme.

■ **Upgrading Polish education and training (UPET) – Phare 91 (1991-1995), ECU 1,000,000**

Besides continued support for the Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges, the programme objective was to prepare expert papers on "establishing qualification standards in secondary-level and college vocational studies", and "creating a national system for classification and assessment for comprehensive schools in Poland". The two papers provided a stimulus for the Phare-funded

182 P. Grootings (red), Education in transformation period, IFiS PAN, Warsaw 1997.

183 D. Parkes, *Curriculum Contents and Delivery in Vocational Education and Training: How Can Poland Benefit from the Experience of other European Countries*, BKKK, Warsaw 1992.

TERM and SMART programmes, which focused primarily on general education. The programme funds were also used to establish the Strategy and Policy Unit of the Ministry of National Education, which later developed into the Education Strategy Department.

The most important contributor to the reform of the vocational education system was the programme component under which work commenced on new training curricula for 29 professions of the new classification, which was approved by the Ministry of National Education in 1993 and comprised 139 occupations. Work continues on these curricula under the IMPROVE programme.

- **Implementation of Modernised Programmes in Vocational Education (IMPROVE) – Phare 94 (1995-1996), ECU 4,000,000**

  IMPROVE continues work that was begun under the UPET programme and focuses on the fine-tuning of the curricula and their trial implementation in 35 vocational schools. The trial implementation is carried out on a comprehensive basis and covers such elements as equipment provision and teacher training. IMPROVE also includes a trial implementation, in general secondary schools, of core skill training. The programme ended on 30 June 1997.

- **Modernisation of Vocational Education (MOVE) – Phare 92, (1993-1996), ECU 4,900,000**

  The programme concept was developed in 1992 and was designed to back up a programme for the support of the Polish vocational education and training system to be financed by the World Bank.

  MOVE covered an integrated set of undertakings aimed at the development and implementation of new curricula in 60 schools and 10 *voivods*, covering the following subjects: physics, environmental protection, computer science, the English language and a new subject called "introduction to the world of work". The new curricula were developed by an international team of experts and were verified against criteria set earlier by the International Standards and Evaluation Committee. The new curricula have been introduced in trial schools since the beginning of the 1995/96 school year. Plans for the World Bank project have been, however, abandoned and MOVE is not being continued under the Phare programme either.

  The effectiveness of those programmes, which were designed to bring about substantial system changes, was affected by their unstable institutional and legal framework. This refers, in particular, to the programmes aimed at curriculum development. Work on the new curricula commenced at a time when "curriculum minima" were still a requirement. The introduction of base curricula took place when work upon new curricula had already been completed under MOVE and well advanced under IMPROVE. The necessary adjustment of the curricula to the new requirements, and their verification and validation by the Curricula Commissions, which had only been set up during the course of the two programmes, constituted a legal barrier which has made wider implementation of the curricula impossible, at least for the time being. Thus, the curricula are still being implemented, on a trial basis, in only a limited number of schools. The financial aspect further hinders wider implementation, as there are no resources in the education budget to modernise the infrastructure, which is indispensable for the successful delivery of the new curricula.

- **The Programme for Education in Strategic Areas (TESSA) – Phare 92, 1993-1996, ECU 4,100,000**

  The programme was managed by the Foundation for Education System Development in support of Ministry of National Education initiatives aimed at restructuring the education system from the post-secondary to the postgraduate level. The "Innovation Fund" which was established within the programme, financed projects relating to both modernisation of curricula already in use and

development of new ones in the areas of management, public administration, European law and economics, environmental protection and foreign languages. All state and private training providers operating at the levels in question could apply for financing from the programme.

The TESSA programme had an impact on the institutional development of the beneficiary institutions. However, from the point of view of the programme objective as a whole – the restructuring of training at all levels from the post-secondary to the postgraduate – its impact was not substantial. This is primarily due to the predominance of higher schools as beneficiaries (57%), in whose case the grants did not bring about a radical change in the quality of the training on offer since most of these establishments had already enjoyed similar support from other programmes such as Tempus or bilateral programmes. Moreover, it was the management and marketing courses, which already dominated other assistance programmes, that were the principal recipients of aid from the programme. Unfortunately, post secondary schools, which were the more deserving of support, received only 17% of the grant and, therefore, the programme can hardly be considered to have materially supported this weakest element of the training system.

- **Recognition of Vocational Qualifications – Component 0707-01-04-0009 European Union Institutional Development Programme PL9707 – EUR 600,000**

The aim of the programme is to support the reform of the Polish vocational education and training system by establishing a system of qualification recognition. Within the programme the completion of the following tasks is planned:

- to work out, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy as well as the social partners, a homogeneous form of qualification standards, a system of examination, accreditation and certification;
- to prepare procedures for the national examination system in vocational education;
- to establish an institutional infrastructure for the national examination system and for the assessment of vocational qualifications; and
- to prepare a national system of units accrediting vocational qualifications gained in both in-school and out-of-school systems.

The project will be carried out throughout the year 2000. Its implementation has been much delayed already compared to its original schedule. It is assumed that this project will make considerable use of the results of the previous Phare programmes as well as of the project 'Building up the system of vocational qualification standards in Poland', implemented since 1998.

- **'Building up the System of Vocational Qualification Standards in Poland' EUR 60,000**

The project was initiated in 1998 by the European Training Foundation and was part of the multinational programme financed by this organisation. It was aimed at working out, on the basis of work analysis, examples of vocational qualification standards for two branches:

- mechanical – for a mechanical technician; and
- economic – for a clerk in financial-accounting units.

The current phase of the project has been completed and it is planned to continue it in the year 2000 in order to:

- create vocational qualification standards for the next group of occupations, including, local administration clerk, vocational counsellor and employment service clerk;
- verify the methodology of building vocational qualification standards worked out in the first phase of the project; and

- work out recommendations for a methodology of building vocational qualification standards for regulated professions on the secondary level.

■ **Special Preparatory Programme – European Social Fund**

The Special Preparatory Programme-European Social Fund was initiated in 1998 by the European Training Foundation and is addressed to public administration employees of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. The programme includes the organisation, in each country, of 5 workshops concerning the use of the European Social Fund, study visits in European Union Member States and preparation of reports which will provide a base for creating an "Employment Policy Review" in each country.

The Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund has funds of EUR 2,100,000 at its disposal. The Polish part of the programme covers the organisation of a series of closed training sessions for about 250 representatives of central and local administration. The budget for this part of the Special Preparatory Programme-European Social Fund amounts to EUR 40,950.

■ **The Leonardo da Vinci Programme**

In 1998, Poland gained the right to take part in the European Union Leonardo da Vinci Programme, which is aimed at supporting vocational education and training development in participating countries through:

- international pilot projects promoting innovation in vocational education and training;
- surveys and analysis projects in the field of vocational education and training; and
- placement and exchange projects for various groups of beneficiaries, including pupils, students, employees and the unemployed, teachers etc.

The annual budget envisaged for financing Polish participation in the programme was about EUR 6,000,000. In 1998, the European Commission accepted 15 pilot projects and 2 surveys and analysis projects whose promoters are Polish institutions. In the area of placements and exchanges, 54 projects were accepted, of which 46 have been carried out. Of the 1,049 persons who participated in this type of project, 481 were vocational education and training school pupils and graduates, 333 were employees and unemployed and 235 were teachers, training managers and organisers.

In the 1999 Call for Proposals, 21 pilot projects and one placement and exchange project with Polish promoters were accepted. In addition, in the area of placements and exchanges, 84 projects were accepted in the Country Call for Proposals. The major group of beneficiaries in these projects, with 650 participants, were vocational education and training school pupils and graduates. However, 478 young employees and unemployed and 458 vocational education and training teachers and training organisers also took part in the placement and exchange projects.

The implementation of the first pilot projects started only in the second half of 1999 and, for this reason, it is too early to speak of their results or their impact on the vocational education and training system. Nevertheless, the subject matter of the applications as well as the type of institutions submitting projects – higher education institutions predominate – would indicate that these projects will mainly result in institutional development of the above-mentioned units and their environment. Since Polish higher education institutions are rather reluctant to co-operate with final beneficiaries, especially those from the economic sector, there is a fear that the impact of many projects on their local or regional environment might be limited.

Mass participation of Polish institutions in placement and exchange projects of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme has been an unquestionable success. However, projects of this type do not have

a system dimension and bring benefits, in the first place, to their direct participants, i.e., individual persons. However, the impact of the participation of a significant number of vocational education and training teachers and training organisers should be taken into account, since involving such a great number of people in international co-operation may provide a basis for better implementation of innovation in vocational education and training and contribute to the success of reform in this area.

8.1.3 *The World Bank programme: "Promotion of Employment and Employment Service Development"*

This programme was financed by a loan of USD 80,000,000 and the Polish Government's contribution of USD 33,500,000 and ran from 1991-96.

The programme's primary objectives were as follows:

- implementation of methods for measuring the effectiveness of employment and welfare programmes;
- improvement of services for the unemployed, those looking for employment, and social welfare recipients;
- strengthening the market for training of the unemployed; and
- entrepreneurial development among the unemployed.

The initiatives undertaken under the TOR#8 programme, which dealt with upgrading of services provided by employment agencies, and under the TOR#9 programme, which dealt with vocational training for adults, were of particular importance for the development of vocational training.

The following targets were achieved under the TOR#8 programme:

- tests for measuring vocational interests and aptitudes were developed;
- a body of information on professions was collected consisting of 550 briefs, 200 files and "A Guidebook to Professions", which will become a database of professions in Poland and, subject to continuous updating, will be used to establish a modern, widely accessible vocational information system.
- training programmes were developed for employment service workers; and
- training programmes were developed for career guides.

TOR#9 aimed at:

- developing nation-wide principles of co-operation between training institutions and labour offices; and
- modernising the training on offer to the unemployed by providing the institutions participating in the project with training for modular curriculum authors and trainers, expert support in the development and implementation of modular training curricula, and training equipment needed for the implementation of these curricula.

The establishment of a network of 13 training centres of excellence and of a body of modular training curricula covering some 70 specialisations and 960 modules was a major outcome of the TOR#9 programme.

The achievements of the World Bank projects became a vital element of the reform and modernisation of the Polish labour market and employment services. The initiatives undertaken

under the project laid down foundations for systemic reform in areas within vocational education and training, such as, information systems, career guidance and the training of the unemployed.

8.1.4 *Conclusions*

When considering prospects for future assistance for Poland in vocational education and training, the following should be taken into account.

- The level of financing is gradually decreasing as a result of the perception by some donor states that reform in Poland is so well advanced that assistance should be phased out and transferred to countries in a less favourable condition. This view is held by those donor states that considered aid to Poland as development assistance, similar to that offered to Third World countries. Poland's admission to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was, for those states, a prompt to withdraw their assistance activities. In the case of most European Union Member States, a tendency prevails to look for savings in their assistance funds so as to reduce their budget deficits. A tendency is likely to develop, therefore, to utilise the diminishing resources to support bilateral co-operation projects aimed at a cultural or economic boost to a given country, rather than to support wider reform initiatives. In the year 2000, in the context of bilateral co-operation no significant financing for vocational education and training system reform is anticipated.
- A reorientation of the Phare fund has been taking place since 1998. The approach, until then, of financing a significant number of programmes in various sectors (a "requirement-driven" programme), has been dropped in favour of a focus on European Union integration issues (an "accession-driven" programme).
- For the Polish Government, integration with Europe will be the priority in the utilisation of the assistance resources during the next couple of years. Vocational education and training is not, in this respect, a priority area, as is demonstrated by its modest share in the National Integration Strategy objectives. Furthermore, Polish priorities for the Phare Programme, outlined in the European Commission's 1998 'Partnership for Membership' document and its amended 1999 version, do not include meaningful support for vocational education and training. The preparations for receiving aid from the European Social Fund are the exception. In 'Regular Report 1999', regarding the state of Polish preparation for European Union membership, the European Commission indicates the necessity to develop continuing education.
- For these reasons, foreign assistance will, in the next few years, be focused on supporting the following activities:
  - Poland's participation in the European Union's Leonardo da Vinci II Programme, for which further Phare co-financing is expected;
  - training the public and local administration management, including education managers, in areas relating to the integration process and especially on the preparatory measures for participation in the European Social Fund;
  - continuation of projects in vocational education directly linked to the integration process, such as, establishing a system of vocational qualification standards, ensuring labour force mobility, the recognition of qualifications etc.; and
  - efforts to include in the Phare agenda, projects supporting continuing education development in line with the European Commission's recommendation in "Regular Report 99", mentioned above.

9. Constraints and challenges

The transformation of the Polish vocational education and training system has been affected by the economic changes designed to strengthen Poland's market economy. The reform of vocational education has often been forced by changes on the local labour market. Although, between 1994-1997, there was a marked decline in unemployment the continuing high level was a particularly significant factor. The resumption of the upward trend in both 1998 and 1999 is likely to have a further adverse impact on the reform process.

Attempts by successive governments to systematically reform vocational education have, as yet, not led to the desired changes. The prospects of further reform of vocational education and training are now interlinked with those of other reforms which were embarked upon in 1999. These include:

- reform of local council, regional and state administration;
- reform of the social insurance system;
- reform of the education system; and
- reform of the health system.

The regional reform, which started in January 1999 and is already leading to the transfer of most decisions from the national administration to local government bodies, will certainly have major implications for the further development of vocational education and training. The education reform, which started in September 1999 and which is changing the structure of the school system, will also exercise a considerable influence. Although the results of these reforms will only be visible in the longer term, it is already evident that much remains to be done with regard to the development of vocational education and training.

Further shifts in the Polish education and vocational training system will continue along the lines, of and under pressure from, the need to adapt to European Union standards.

The tables which follow outline the most pressing needs and problems facing vocational education and training - both those which have always been present and those which have arisen from the reform process.

Specific aspects of the reform process in vocational education and training	Needs for reform	The main obstacles to the reform process	Comments
1. Reforming the vocational education and training system			
1.1 Developing initial vocational education and training system quality	1. Formulating a future vision of the vocational education and training system	■ vocational education and training does not have its rightful place in either the national development strategy or in the education reform project	■ divergence of strategic assumptions and financial policy ■ the reform project is not all-extensive, the vocational education and training sphere has not been touched by the state education reform ■ lack of awareness by policy makers of the vocational education and training role, especially with regard to the international labour market ■ education policy priorities include vocational education, education adapting to the labour market or continuing education
	2. Working out a system of vocational qualification standards	■ some work on structural merging of the vocational classification for the economy and vocational classification for the school system have been undertaken ■ lack of best-practice, mechanisms and institutions for standardising qualifications	■ the awareness of the need for creating a qualifications standard system is being consolidated ■ work on the model of a system is under way
	3. Matching initial and continuing vocational education systems	■ structural separation of those two subsystems ■ the education reform project does not include continuing education	■ a new logic of integrating initial and continuing vocational education is being sought
	4. Intensification of modernisation of the education process in the context of new education reforms	■ scanty financing and insufficient infrastructure ■ inadequate motivating mechanisms in education (including wages) ■ unsatisfactory teacher development system	■ delay in the modernisation process due to uncertainty about what the reform project involves
1.2 Developing continuing vocational training quality	1. Introduction of continuing education into the education reform project	■ decision makers at all administration levels do not appreciate the role of continuing education	■ the idea of lifelong learning is not well grounded in the mentality of society
	2. Setting systemic rules for continuing vocational education and defining the roles of key actors	■ dispersed responsibility on the part of the state ■ employers are not sufficiently aware, ready and motivated to stimulate the reforms ■ still a lack of consensus between the key actors ■ government sees its role mainly in the training of the unemployed ■ lack of a stable system of tax deductions	■ a dispersed free market in education services is functioning in spite of a lack of system regulators ■ an organised system for the training and retraining of the unemployed exists
	3. Creating a system of quality assurance	■ unspecified scope of government responsibility ■ lack of sufficient self-organisation of employers ■ education institutions do not see the need to co-operate in the field of quality assurance	■ some initiatives in implementing common standards were undertaken in the fields of management education and foreign language teaching ■ the education reform project envisages creation of a quality assurance system

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Specific aspects of the reform process in vocational education and training	Needs for reform	The main obstacles to the reform process	Comments
	4. Adapting the methods and forms of education to different clients' needs	■ insufficient structural, organisational and teaching flexibility ■ limited possibilities to invest in development and innovations *Note: The above mentioned attributes characterise, to different degrees, particular segments of continuing vocational training*	■ such initiatives are undertaken in some branch sectors, e.g., banking ■ in the public sector, distance education is well developed
1.3 Improving the management and financing of the vocational education and training system	1. Adaptation of the management and financing system to the reform of state administration	■ no clear delineation of responsibilities for the relevant authorities ■ no model of information flow between particular levels in the school system or between social spheres	■ a legislative framework for such communication exists but is not fully used
	2. Establishing new rules and mechanisms for steering vocational education and training at the regional level and for coordination at the national level	■ new structures are not sufficiently prepared for undertaking decentralised tasks ■ regional differences	■ there is a need to train the regional and local administration staff in the field of management and finance
	3. Creation of new structures and relationships for social dialogue at the new levels of management	■ occasional interest in dialogue ■ weak self-organisation of employers ■ no tradition of social dialogue at the local level	■ the current and proposed education acts outlines the legislative framework for social dialogue in vocational education and training
	4. Developing social dialogue in the field of vocational education and training management, especially in working out qualification standards	■ education policy makers are insufficiently open to social dialogue	■ lack of education issues on the agenda of social dialogue institutions, e.g., the tripartite commission, employment councils
	5. Assuring that financing is adequate to the scope of undertaken reforms	■ education reform is not a priority in the package of 4 social reforms	■
	6. Introducing out-of-budget sources of financing education, especially vocational education and training	■ low level of involvement of financial establishments in co-financing vocational education and training	■ One of the reasons for this resistance is continuously high labour costs
	7. Improving the efficiency of limited funds	■ unsatisfactory preparation of regional and local authorities for management of public funds	■ effectiveness varies by region

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Specific aspects of the reform process in vocational education and training	Needs for reform	The main obstacles to the reform process	Comments
2. Improving the relationship and communication between the vocational education and training system and the labour market			
2.1 Developing vocational guidance and counselling	1. Development of vocational guidance in education – in initial and continuing education	■ "specialists" in vocational guidance are educated only to a minimal degree ■ insufficient structures for vocational guidance in the education sphere ■ lack of basic equipment at counsellors' workplaces	■ in labour office system, multi-level courses for counsellors' further training are organised
	2. Ensuring common access to vocational orientation and guidance for youths in order to integrate youths with the labour market	■ limited development of vocational orientation and guidance in the school system (particularly in vocational education and training schools) and indications that existing structures are quitting counselling tasks ■ lack of integration with activities of labour market services ■ low material status of vocational counsellors	■ it is necessary because of a persistent demographic peak and high unemployment rates among young people ■ it is necessary because of the introduction of changes in the school system (especially new examination system)
	3. Creating an integrated system of vocational orientation and guidance for youths and adults	■ lack of a legislative and institutional framework in vocational guidance	■ separate vocational guidance practices exist: a fragmentary one in the school system and a systematic one – but insufficient compared with demand – in the system of labour offices
	4. Modernisation of vocational guidance practice	■ defective and old-fashioned methods and means used in counselling	■ the progress in modernisation is different in education and employment services
	5. Introduction of programmes regarding active behaviour on the labour market into education in the school system	■ lack of qualified staff and funds	■ dissemination of existing experience in this field
2.2 Monitoring the vocational education and training system and its linkages with the labour market	1. Creating a complex system of information on the relationship between education and the labour market	■ a change in relationships between education and labour market institutions due to state administration reform	■ the decentralisation has temporarily disintegrated hitherto existing connections and will deepen the by-branch approach to education and labour market issues ■ inefficient mechanisms of gathering and transferring information
	2. Improving the system of information on internal functioning of vocational education and training and creating a system for monitoring external effectiveness of vocational education and training in relation to the labour market	■ inefficient institutional framework and methods of collecting information on the internal monitoring of vocational education and training ■ a lack of a model, institutional framework and best practice for monitoring external functioning of vocational education and training ■ insufficient bilateral flow of information between local, regional and national levels	■ pace of education changes outdistances structural regulations ■ undefined responsibility ■ the problem escalates due to the state administration reform

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Specific aspects of the reform process in vocational education and training	Needs for reform	The main obstacles to the reform process	Comments
	3. Working out a system of ongoing and prospective co-ordination of education and economy needs, starting with a forecast of demand for labour	■ the existing forecast of unemployment and economic development at the regional level is not very useful for forecasting vocational education and training development ■ lack of co-ordinating structures at the local, regional and national level	■ selective forecasts are made in some branches and sectors of economy ■ monitoring and forecasting economic needs is undertaken at the national and regional level
	4. Improvement of the present system of labour market statistics and the current flow of information between the labour market and vocational education and training	■ labour market statistics are too general and not useful for informing education authorities about current and future needs of the labour market ■ insufficient exchange of information between the education and labour departments	■ this state delays and inhibits the making of difficult decisions in education ■ a monitoring of shortage and surplus occupations exists in some voivods
	5. Development of active methods of counteracting unemployment among young people	■ domination of short-term labour market policy ■ insufficient funds for vocational activation programmes	■ some government programmes supporting vocational insertion of young persons are in operation ■ the active behaviour of young persons on the labour market programme has been started
2.3 Adaptation of vocational education and training system to regional and sectoral changes	1. Due to the state decentralisation reform, adaptive mechanisms are starting at the regional level	■ in new regional arrangements socio-economic priorities, including education ones, are not clearly defined	■ activities of regions in this field is varied so far
	2. Restructuring vocational education and training according to forecast sectoral changes in employment	■ general character of long-term economic forecasts ■ necessity for creation of socio-economic development strategies in new regions ■ owing to the state administration and education reforms the education system is focused on its internal changes and not on adaptation to economic needs	■ the market is signalling current branch shortages in the labour force ■ adaptation of economic and education needs is being forced regionally or locally by restructuring in some branches (e.g., mining, agriculture)
2.4 Improving social partnership in vocational education and training	1. Developing multi-subject social dialogue at the national, regional and local level	■ excessive burden on the state for responsibility for the condition and development of vocational education and training ■ divergence of key actors' interests and lack of will for consensus in support of vocational education and training development	■ the existing legal framework for social dialogue is not used sufficiently
	2. Establishing co-operation in the field of school education, continuing education and labour market policy	■ inertia of the education establishments	■ some initiatives exist at the local and regional level

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Major organisations

BKKK	Biuro Koordynacji Kształcenia Kadr (Task Force for Training and Human Resources)
CKP	Practical Education Centres
CKU	Centres for Continuing Education
CODN	The In-Service Teacher Training Centre
GUS	Central Statistical Office
IBE	The Institute of Education Research
IPiPS	Institute of Labour and Social Policy
KBN	The Committee for Scientific Research
KUP	National Labour Office
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MPiPS	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP)
OCEN	The National Centre of Distance Education
PAN	Polish Academy of Science
WOM	Regional Methodology Centres
ZZDZ	The Association of Vocational Training Institutes

List of abbreviations

CVT	Continuing Vocational Training
Dz.U.	The Official Journal of Laws
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FGSP	Guaranteed Employee Compensation Fund
FUS	Social Insurance Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross national product
GVA	Gross Value Added
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
NIF	National Investment Funds
NGO-s	Non-Government Organisations
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
PFRON	State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons
PGRs	State Farms
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
ZUS	State Social Insurance Agency

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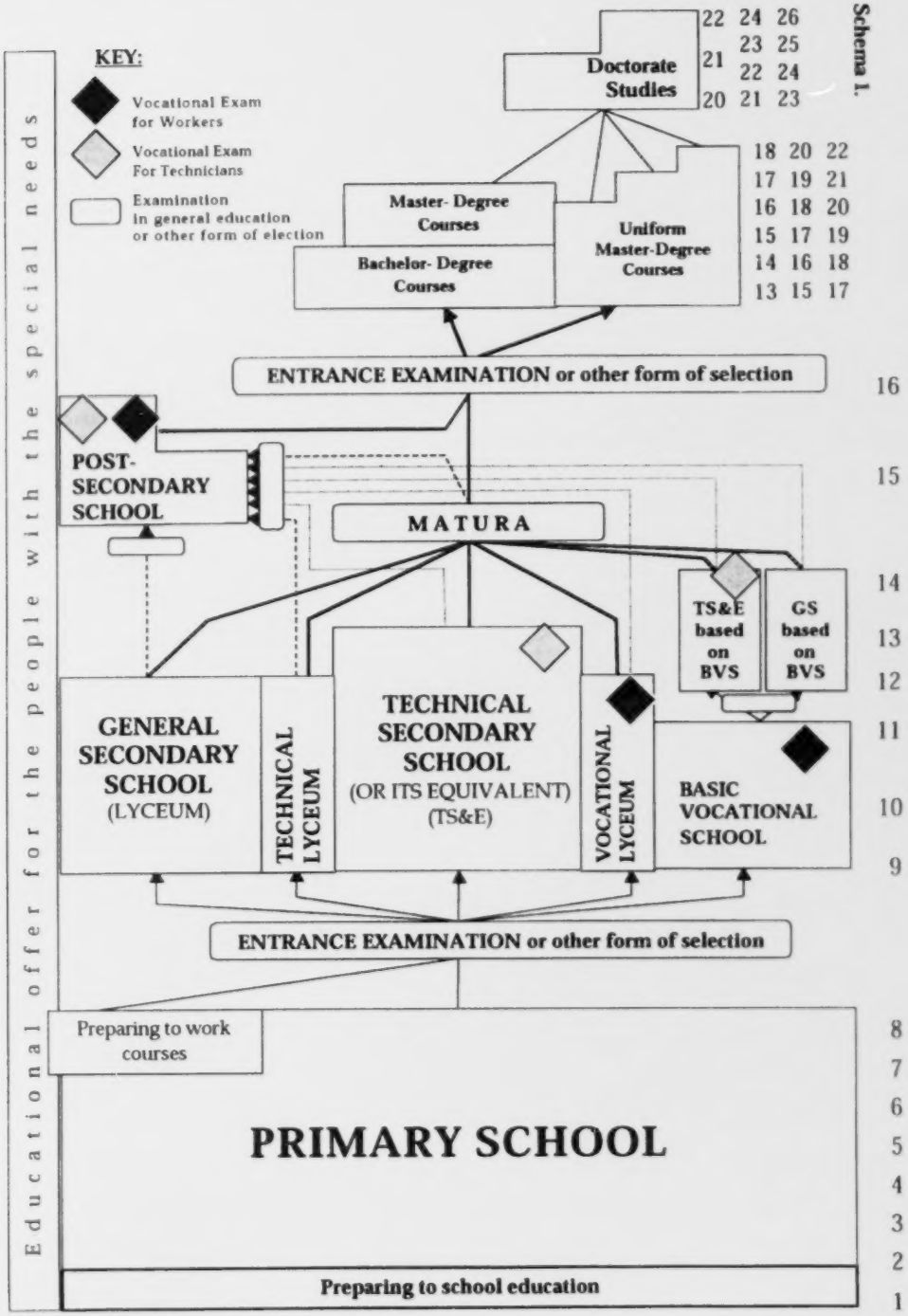
**Available only in Polish*

Annex 1 – Diagram of the current Polish education and training system

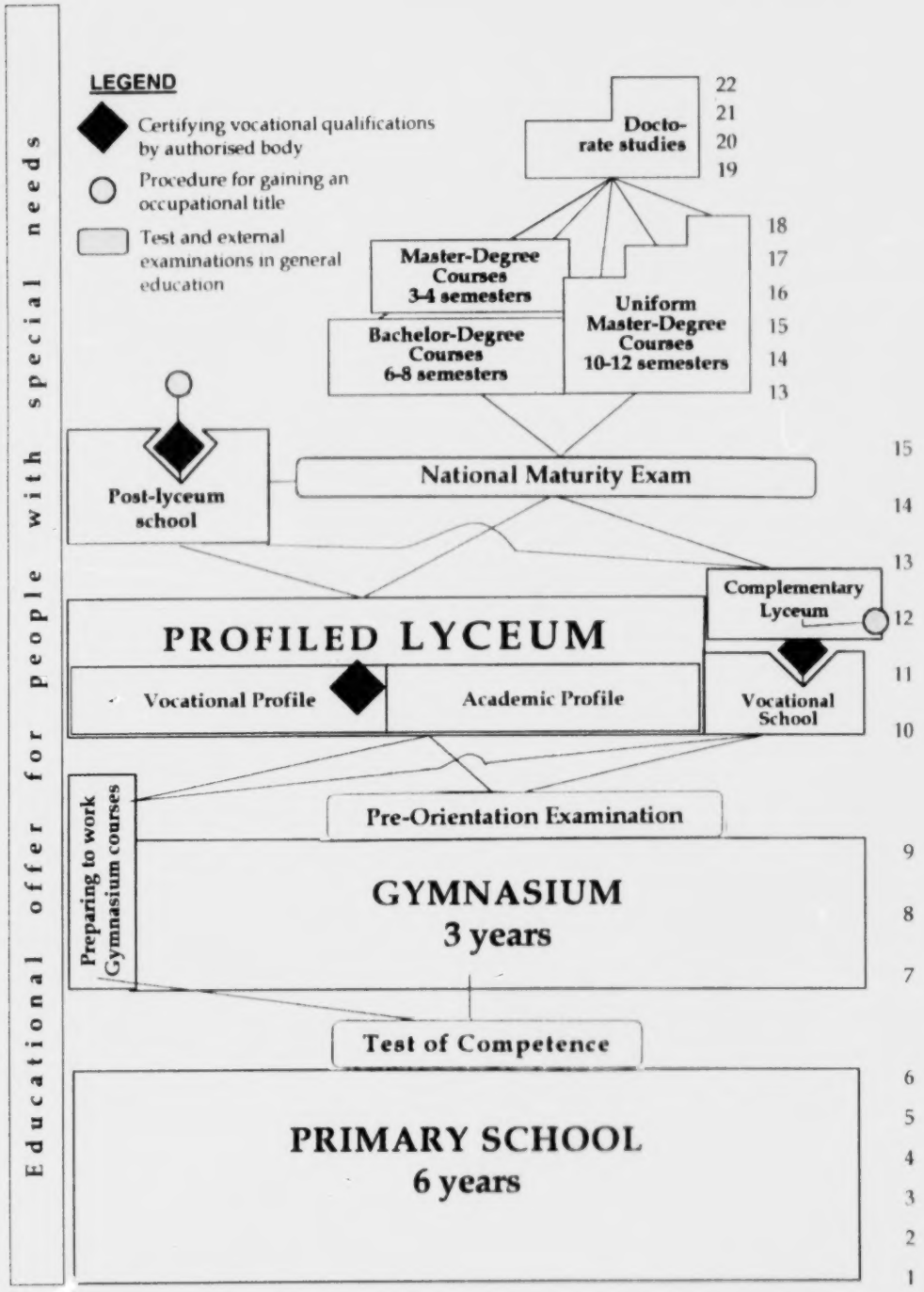


Annex 2 – Number of pupils and graduates in the school year 1998/99

Pupils and students - 1998/9 academic school years.
Graduates from 1997/8
%abs

Source: Small Statistical Annual, NSO, Warsaw 1999

Annex 3 – Diagram of the reformed Polish education system



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Annex 4 – Polish National Observatory

Background

The Polish National Observatory was established at the Task Force for Human Resources (BKKK) in Warsaw in October 1996.

The main tasks of the National Observatory are to provide:

- detailed analysis of the vocational education and training system, its trends and development directions, including socio-economic conditions;
- identification of educational needs and national priorities in the field of vocational education and training;
- monitoring international co-operation (bilateral and multilateral) in the field of vocational education and training;
- creating a network of key institutions, persons and social partners involved in vocational education and training on the national, regional and local level;
- dissemination of results.

The Observatory staff, consisting of three people, is supported by an internal advisory body of BKKK's employees. The National Observatory has established a network of external experts and key institutions involved in vocational education and training such as the Ministry of National Education, the National Labour Office, the National Statistical Office, Warsaw University, the Mickiewicz University in Poznań, the Institute for Educational Research, the Mobile Centre for Vocational Information, Polish Agency of Regional Development etc. This network is being extended continuously. The experts play an active role in the preparation of the report and take part in many other undertakings of the Observatory.

The activities of the National Observatory, in accordance with the contract, are supervised by its Steering Group, whose members represent the following organisations:

- Department of Foreign Assistance, Community Programmes and Funds, Committee for European Integration;
- Task Force For Training &Human Resources;
- the Confederation of Polish Employers;
- the National Labour Office;
- the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- the Ministry of National Education;
- the Union Committee for European Integration NSZZ "Solidarność";
- the Institute of Educational Research;

- OPZZ Trade Union;
- the National Statistical Office.

Apart from an advisory role, the Steering Group facilitates access to information sources and acts as an official liaison with governmental organisations and social partners involved in vocational education and training.

Thanks to regular meetings of the Observatory network, the Polish Observatory made many fruitful contacts with other observatories, which has led to the collection of a significant amount of comparative material on educational systems in other European countries.

Activities

The main undertaking of the National Observatory is the annual preparation and publication of the Vocational Education and Training Country Report, which has a unified structure and comprises a wide range of topics. Its aim is to fully illustrate the vocational education and training system and its developments in the midst of changes affecting it.

Co-operation with the European Training Foundation

The Polish Observatory participates in projects launched by the European Training Foundation, which lead to the production of country reports on specific aspects of vocational education and training. So far, the following reports have been prepared:

- Involvement of Social Partners in Vocational Education and Training;
- Vocational Education at the Tertiary Level;
- Vocational Education and Training in the Context of Regional Development in Lublin Region;
- Regulated Professions;
- Continuing Education;
- Teacher/Trainer Education;
- Model of integrated vocational information and guidance system;
- Standards and transparency of qualifications.

Polish Observatory projects

The National Observatory together with its experts and collaborating institutions carries out its own projects, whose subjects respond to specific national needs. Up until now the National Observatory has conducted or participated in the following projects:

- Vocational Education and the Labour Market – the Model of Co-operation – in collaboration with the Centre for Practical Training in Łódź;
- Regional Differences in Vocational Education and Training Development – Study on Three Regions of Various Socio-economic Conditions;
- HR 500 Plus – research regarding the human resource policy in the 500 biggest Polish enterprises – in co-operation with Polish Commercial Information Centre and Data Group.

Other activities

The National Observatory tries to fill the gap between the educational and labour market spheres and in the area of institutions involved in educational research, so amongst its tasks foreseen in the work programme are:

- gathering and analysing information on vocational education and training and labour market;
- steering the flow of information between vocational education and training and labour market spheres as well as between local, regional and national levels;
- creating network and data bases on experts and key institutions;
- organising seminars and workshops and preparing publications on the interesting topics;
- others.

Updated drafts of the report and information about the National Observatory activities are available via the internet on the BKKK homepage - http://www.cofund.org.pl. On the same homepage access to a discussion group of people interested in vocational education and training issues is provided.

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Annex 5 – New territorial division of Poland

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